



# Environmental Assessment Comments

First Name Begins with N or O

*Ordered by first name*

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## 2019 0330 Nancy D'Inzillo

**Comment:** No Comment Included

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0307 Nancy Bales

**Comment:** I am strongly opposed to freeway expansion as a solution to reducing congestion problems on I 5 and urge you to implement decongestion pricing as a first intervention. If that were to fail to bring about the needed changes, other plans can always be pursued later. Freeway expansion, in other areas on I 5 and elsewhere, has shown to worsen congestion over the long-term. It increases pollution and puts our population at risk of greater health issues. In addition, it is reckless and irresponsible to pursue a plan in the face of dire climate challenges which are affecting our air, our health, and our well-being. Instead, we should be focused on making alternatives to single car transport more attractive and viable. I strongly urge you to please reconsider the plan to widen our freeways and, instead, implement decongestion pricing as a first measure to relieve congestion.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0330 Nancy D'Inzillo

**Comment:** I strongly oppose the freeway expansion project. Freeway expansion has never solved traffic congestion, in any North American city, anywhere. Ever! Moreover, the Portland area has already experienced adverse air quality effects the last few years due to climate change. This project will accelerate climate change by encouraging yet more vehicles in the area we do not need. There are several other projects where the money would be better spent, including fixing the roads and highways we already have. This is not a good option.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0312 Naomi Fast

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Hi, I'm Naomi Fast. And you've heard from a lot of Portlanders tonight. I'm a former Portlander. I lived here for 10 years. It's where I learned to commute. I now live in Beaverton and I'm in a zero-car household. I want to talk about Hillsboro. I noticed somebody was here from the Hillsboro mayor's office. And so I want to talk about Hillsboro. First of all, I'm opposed to this project. It didn't consider congestion pricing, which I think is really important. I've seen a lot of road widening out in Washington County, and not enough attention to bringing in buses for people who are commuting to big employers out there. Whether it be from Vancouver, Washington or Gresham, we need more buses and transit because congestion is just everywhere. We're not going to solve it by widening roads. In just the last three months in Hillsboro, at least five people were killed by drivers on Hillsboro streets that are controlled by



ODOT. Four of those people were on foot, and a lot of people walk out there or bike. I do. I don't own a car. On January 19th, a hit-and-run driver killed Marjorie Averill as she walked along Cornell Road at 17th with her date. And he later told a reporter "I just want her to get justice, you know. She didn't do anything to anybody to deserve that." There's been no word on whether the hit-and-run driver was found. And then last Saturday night, March 9 around 7:00, 59-year-old Dionicio Olvera was struck while crossing TV Highway. The Washington County Sheriff's deputy Shannon Wile (ph) was quoted as saying, "Unfortunately, there are no marked crosswalks. It's just not a good situation for anyone that needs to cross the road here." And other people are saying it's so dark in that area it's impossible to see people even in bright clothes. These comments don't address the near-misses on these roads, and yet we're spending \$500 million, or want to, on this freeway widening. We need safety on ODOT roads across Oregon. Thanks.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0329 Naomi Fast

**Comment:** People who work in transportation planning are likely to encounter that famous Lewis Mumford quote: "Adding highway lanes to deal with traffic congestion is like loosening your belt to cure obesity." But a more specific analogy for the I-5 Rose Quarter "bottleneck" project (I-5 RQ) might be liposuction gone wrong. TV advertising for "body contouring" is off the charts lately. I was reading some of the hundreds of Better Business Bureau complaints about these companies' work. Unhappy clients describe how taking fat cells out of one "area" led to freakish, unnatural fat bulges elsewhere on their bodies. Unfortunate patients had to return to have fat sucked and sculpted again and again, from the new areas. Many say, "I wish I'd never done this procedure in the first place."

A freeway through our city is like that. Expanding freeway bottleneck by bottleneck leads to freakish bulges of cars in other areas. Road widening is not a solution for reducing congestion, as evidenced by ODOT's recent I-5 interchange expansions that bookend the I-5 RQ area. Neither area is reliably safer or less congested as promised. See <http://cityobservatory.org/safety-last-what-weve-learned-from-widening-the-i-5-freeway/> and [http://cityobservatory.org/backfire\\_wider\\_worse\\_traffic/](http://cityobservatory.org/backfire_wider_worse_traffic/).

I'm a Washington County resident of Beaverton, where I'm impacted by the number of vehicles with single occupants pouring into my county every morning from the I-5, cutting through neighborhoods near my residence. I can hear the morning drone of Hwy 26 even with my bedroom window closed. The county unfortunately responds by widening its arterials, which residents pay for, even people like me who don't own a car.

Not owning a car defines my day-to-day experiences. Besides wanting to act on climate and protect clean air and water, I care deeply about putting the brakes on the I-5 RQ project because of my experience using roads primarily by bike, foot and bus for the last decade.

Level-of-service for active commuters remains poor. Unlike people who use cars, I've had to take time away from my work & play to teach myself about roads, in hopes of getting my travel



needs met. Roads & sidewalks I use are designed & maintained by multiple jurisdictions, including ODOT. The quality of bike lanes and walkability varies depending on who "owns" the road. In my city, ODOT-controlled roads are the worst to walk and bike. That's one reason I don't trust ODOT to design or build bike infrastructure that does not feel hostile to the user. Though ODOT has agreed to things like studying opening crosswalks at Hwy 26 intersections with arterials like Murray, which I appreciate, ODOT's proposed 10% grade(!) for an I-5 RQ bike crossing reinforces my lack of trust that they understand or value my needs as an active commuter. Another example is ODOT cutting down mature street trees, whether in the name of "safety" or more lanes at I-5 RQ. Studies show trees calm the streets, not to mention balm hot asphalt made hotter by climate change. Heat islands are terrible for active commuters. Cars running air conditioners next to bike lanes generate tremendous heat.

Near me, TV Highway/Canyon is one deadly ODOT road that desperately needs to be changed. I testified about TV Hwy in Hillsboro at the public hearing March 12th. But last weekend I visited the coast, by bus. Highway 101 is yet another ODOT road lacking facilities for people not using a car. Just two days ago, on March 27, a 71 year old Seaside resident was walking when he was hit by a driver and went to the hospital with serious injuries. Although there aren't continuous sidewalks or lights or even crosswalk stripes to help residents use that road, the police report said, "Contributing factors as to why [he] may have been struck include nighttime, limited visibility and dark, non-reflective clothing worn."

([http://www.flashalertnewswire.net/images/news/2019-03/3677/123169/03.27.19\\_Picard\\_MVA\\_vs\\_Pedestrian.pdf](http://www.flashalertnewswire.net/images/news/2019-03/3677/123169/03.27.19_Picard_MVA_vs_Pedestrian.pdf))

Imagine that being said about a driver whose car was side-swiped on I-5! Instead, in the I-5 RQ EA, ODOT takes responsibility and blames the I-5 RQ interchange itself for fender benders. ODOT even calls adding lanes on I-5 a "safety" project despite no fatalities there in a decade. Surely ODOT and police should also be blaming ODOT-managed roads like TV Hwy and Hwy 101 when people crossing them sustain serious injuries or death. The unforgiving level-of-service on these roads needs to be changed, urgently.

To that, I request that ODOT and legislators correct the funding error in HB 2017 that apparently prioritizes a chimera of faster car movement at I-5 RQ over protecting human life in residential Seaside or Beaverton or Hillsboro and elsewhere in Oregon. I strongly protest Oregon spending millions on freeway widening anywhere in the state when residents are being killed on these other ODOT roads. It's unhealthy that people can't walk through their cities without being harried by cars. A road of roaring, speeding cars is never part of places people enjoy.

This EA I've been studying over the past few weeks reveals other fundamental problems with the I-5 RQ project, not the least of which is that it doesn't consider congestion pricing or ramp-closure as options. It also doesn't calculate time delays per person (including bus passengers) or factor in adding bus-only lanes or Portland's benchmark of reaching 15% of all trips by bicycle by next year, and 25% by 2030.

(<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/44597?a=379136>). If our state DOTs would design for mode shift away from cars, mode shift is a much surer thing than going six years back to the past, building the Columbia River Crossing, then zipping back to the future. We'd need Michael J. Fox and a working time machine for that! And yet, that's just what it appears



was done in the EA, according to OPB: <https://www.opb.org/news/article/odot-used-long-dead-i-5-bridge-replacement-to-plan-rose-quarter-upgrade/>. This project has now received critical attention of transportation experts nationwide.

I expect if ODOT does not agree to pursue a path of deeper study of this project and its impacts, it will be sued over its lack of transparency, late submission of key documents for public review, and calculations that seem designed to mislead in the face of climate change. Civil engineers can speak to the incorrect & obscured traffic data better than I can, but it's clear what ODOT has presented is not in balance with 2019 realities & available options.

I request an environmental impact statement (EIS) be done for the I-5 RQ project. ODOT, please study ramp closures as a weaving solution, and study strategically placed hydraulic bollards to prevent cut-through motor traffic on Flint. Furthermore, I implore that the project not be done at all as planned. Congestion pricing must be implemented on our freeways, concurrent with improving suburban and regional bus service to and from Washington County's major employers. I am asking ODOT to choose road diets, not liposuction.

Finally, please, no pile driving in the Willamette just to fit more diesel & GHG-belching vehicles through a manmade "bottleneck." Let the Steller Sea Lions passing through the Willamette, which are protected under both the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, retain their hearing.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0402 Natalie Fisher

*General Public*

**Comment:** Please do not widen i-5 in Portland. Please do not spend \$500 million on roads that will significantly degrade public transit and public spaces, especially affecting those in historically oppressed and marginalized communities. Other cities have widened their freeways too in hopes that it will curb the effects of climate change, but we see time and time again that it does nothing. Please do not make the same mistake.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0226 Natalie Padilla

**Comment:** Freeway Expansion is Climate Denialism. 40% of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation as a recent Oregonian article pointed out, Oregon simply cannot decarbonize our transportation sector without driving a lot less. If we are going to spend \$500,000,000 on a transportation project that addresses the urgent existential threat that climate change represents, this money should be spent on improving and prioritizing public transportation and building walkable communities! Freeway expansion has never solved traffic congestion, in any North American city, anywhere. Ever! ODOT's own hired consultants admit that this project won't address recurring traffic congestion on this corridor.



**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0401 Nate Owen

**Comment:** PLEASE do not go through with this, now is NOT the time to be expanding car infrastructure.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0402 Nathan Backous

**Comment:** Investing hundreds of million dollars on increasing potential capacity of such a small stretch of I5 won't have any positive impacts. Inducing demand by adding capacity will result in congestion that is just as bad as it is currently while amplifying the problems our current freeway system already causes: pollution, collisions, and further displacement of communities. Spending hundreds of millions of dollars to make these problems worse also means we can't spend those same hundreds of millions of dollars on things that will actually improve our city and the lives of those that live in it. Don't blow it.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0329 Nathan Leamy

**Comment:** I am disappointed in this proposal. This proposal will not solve the problem it aims to solve and it will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Decongestion Pricing should be implemented before any talk of infrastructure expansion. Decongestion pricing can decrease congestion the problem and garner additional revenue that can be put toward projects that would improve safety, decrease environmental impact, and aid movement across our city and state. I am disappointed in ODOT's handling of this proposal. The comment period was too short (though extended after outcry). Important data has been withheld from public scrutiny. Even data that has been provided is problematic: it doesn't factor for induced demand; it ignores climate change; it plays down the impact on public health; it makes assumptions about bridges that don't exist. I know that these funds are earmarked for this project and that they cannot be simply wished to work on other projects that would be a better return on investment. Nonetheless, I would rather we give up these funds than see them wasted on a project that would make our problems worse. (If it were possible to redirect these funds, they would be much better spent saving lives on the deadly roads that ODOT manages throughout the city of Portland). I expect a full Environmental Impact Statement of this project. I hope ODOT will not continue to disappoint.

**Attachments:** N/A



## 2019 0312 Nathan Leber

**Comment:** While I think that the goal of improving the I-5 is an important goal, the current iteration does not do enough to remedy the currently fragmented neighborhood surrounding either side of the I-5.

The current iteration does show a few scattered freeway caps attempting to reconnect the neighborhood. However, as currently proposed, these "parks" are small, fragmented islands perched on the sides of busy streets. I live on Broadway, next to the I-5. Currently, there are already small pockets of "greenspace" leftover from road realignments and freeway construction. While an open grass area is nice to look at, they are not valuable assets to the community. They do not function as parks, they are too small to provide recreation opportunities and end up places for squatters to occupy. The current I-5 plan will create more orphaned spaces, fragmented and too small to truly be useful to the community.

A better option is to actually reconnect the neighborhood through buildable caps. The area between the Willamette River and the I-5 is a great location close to the river, near downtown Portland, close to the Moda Center, Veterans Coliseum, and Lloyd center. However, the I-5 creates an open wound across the fabric of the neighborhood. Creating buildable caps that would allow for mid-rise development would do much more to restore the fabric of the neighborhood than the currently proposed disjointed "parks" Portland is growing, and the I-5 project can create new development opportunities in the heart of Portland.

I urge you to consider the importance and opportunities that larger, buildable highway caps can bring.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0310 Nathan O'Donnell

*General Public*

**Comment:** I am writing to voice my deep reservations at the I-5 Freeway Expansion boondoggle project, euphemistically known as the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project. Please do not move forward with this absolutely boneheaded and deeply flawed \$500 million dollar project.

First and foremost, never before in the history of engineering projects has widening freeways reduced travel time as proven by countless freeway widening projects throughout the country. Induced demand is a real thing and if you build more highway capacity more people will immediately fill those lanes up with their cars and not so magically traffic problems continue to persist just like they did before the highway was widened.

Second, the scientific consensus on global warming is absolutely clear that if we do not dramatically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions we will be dealing with a climate that will wreak havoc on the planet and future generations. The fact that the state of Oregon is plotting \$500 million dollars to a 1 mile freeway widening mega project that will encourage more driving,



when we know that roughly 40% of Oregon's carbon emissions comes from transportation, is a morally and politically corrupt.

Third, I have serious concerns and reservations that this current project will negatively impact the current bicycle infrastructure in place on Williams/Vancouver AND the decision to remove the Flint bridge in favor of a new Hancock/Dixon bridge, which will be out of the way and increase the grade of the ride for cyclists. We should be doing everything possible to build out and improve on the already existing cycling infrastructure in this part of town and eliminating the Flint Bridge will make cycling in this part of town that much more difficult for people.

Fourth, this project in the EA acknowledges that it will slow transit times if it gets built AND doesn't even acknowledge induced demand, which is a well documented outcome of several previous highway expansion projects.

Finally, this project will push the I-5 freeway even closer to the Harriet Tubman school, which increases the air pollution the students and staff will have to endure and it's well documented that breathing dirty air has dire health outcomes for children. These students are already encouraged not to spend any time outside due to how unhealthy the air is outside of their school and that air is only going to get more polluted with the freeway expanding that much closer to the school.

I sincerely hope this project does NOT move forward in it's current form and that you listen to the serious concerns that many people in Portland have brought up regarding this project.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0312 Nathan Oleson

**Comment:** This project should have been done years ago. The city of Portland (pop 650k) needs to realize it's part of the broader Portland metro region (pop 2.5 million), and does contain veto power over a piece of major regional infrastructure that impacts not only the region but the entire state of Oregon.

US Census Data, ACS data, Portland MSA commuting modes:

70.4% drove alone

9.7% carpool

6.5% public transport

3.3% walked

2.3% bicycle

1.1% taxi, motorcycle, other

6.8% worked at home



That's over 80% of the region who use automobiles to move around. Across race, across class, across socioeconomic backgrounds.

Build it.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0217 Nathan Vaughan

**Comment:** I am opposed to this project on the basis of cost and high likelihood of induced demand. There are so many problems with our current transportation infrastructure and nowhere near the top of that list is this section of I-5. It would only exacerbate our dependence on cars and freeways and push bottlenecks to other areas of the system.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0330 Nathan Vaughan

**Comment:** I have about zero faith this will comment will matter. I am 100% opposed to the Rose Quarter project.

Thanks,

Nathan Vaughan

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0402 Nathaniel Smith

**Comment:** Freeway expansion has never solved traffic congestion, in any North American city, anywhere. ODOT's own hired consultants admit that this project won't address recurring traffic congestion on this corridor. There are numerous examples of induced demand across the country, including most recently in Los Angeles, who spent \$1.6 billion on a "freeway bottleneck" widening project only to find it made traffic worse.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0311 Neon Brooks

**Comment:** As someone who drives through the rose quarter on I-5 regularly, freeway expansion of the rose quarter seems like an INCREDIBLY poor use of transportation resources. It's widely understood that freeway widening does NOT reduce congestion, and it sounds like the costs could easily exceed \$500 million. That money could have a transformational effect in making our city once again a cutting-edge leader in biking, walking, and public transit and help us fight climate change.

**Attachments:** N/A



## 2019 0303 Neva Hauser

**Comment:** I vehemently oppose the Rose Quarter Freeway expansion project proposal. It has been proven that this will not mitigate traffic AND considering climate change should be the #1 concern at this point this money could be going towards expanding public transportation bike lanes. We need to encourage the wave of new Portlanders to take alternative transportation. This is not LA! Keep Portland lean and green please. Thank you.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0401 Nicholas Arnold

**Comment:** Are you serious? No way, be smarter to this, Portland, and look to cities that have risked a lot more to get the livable transportation we need. Congestion won't be improved, healthy lives are at stake, and we need to be courageous in creating the spaces where we want to live: a mix of all forms of transportation designed in a smart way.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0312 Nicholas Buri

*General Public*

**Comment:** I'd like to submit my opposition to the proposed I5 expansion in North pdx. Not only will this fail to alleviate traffic congestion (induced demand), it will be a huge waste of funds that should be spent increasing alternative transportation infrastructure. Assuming that this project won't go over-budget (unlikely), that \$500,000 would go much farther if spent on improving pedestrian, bicycle, and bus transit. With climate change already making its effects known to our region, we should be investing in alternatives to the mode of transit that is currently digging our graves. It's insane to me that a city like Portland would even consider such a backwards, idiotic scheme.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0329 Nicholas Day

*General Public*

**Comment:** I believe expanding the I-5 corridor is both a waste of \$500 million dollars as well as an action that will only help to increase the rate of global climate change. It is a waste due to the fact that increasing the number of lanes for freeway traffic does not

alleviate congestion. This has been shown to be true and the is what economists refer to as latent demand. In addition, it does not increase the size of the attraction(s) people are headed to. I think a good example of this is the freeway parking now available for Multnomah falls. Now that it is available it is much more difficult to park at the falls in either parking lot. This is due to



the increased demand on the falls themselves and the number of visitors is now too large for the falls to accommodate.

In addition, expanding the I-5 freeway will not help to solve the greatest global challenge of today, human caused climate change. Increased number of cars driving will lead to more fossil fuel consumption and increased carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. I strongly believe the best use of the \$500 million dollars of funding will be to increase public transportation, including max lines and biking lanes. Increases in clean public transportation facilities will help the Portland metro area tremendously more than expanding the I-5 corridor.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0320 Nicholas Egan

**Comment:** Freeway is a an uncreative, expensive, and proven to be ineffective measure. \$500 million can be allocated to so many other things, and especially the issue of bringing cars closer to the Harriet Tubman school is not one we can just be quiet about.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0326 Nicholas Hengen Fox

*General Public*

**Comment:** As a resident of Irvington and a parent of future Tubman Middle School students, I write to tell you I am strongly opposed to the plan to expand the I-5 through the Rose Quarter. I know that you have released reports suggesting that this would reduce pollution for kids like mine, but I also know about induced demand--so I'm skeptical that traffic will really move faster through that tight spot. Pretty soon, we'll be back in the same place: traffic jam, but with even more cars. Given that there are more cost-effective alternatives, including congestion pricing and dedicated transit lanes, I cannot support the project or the money to be spent. Thank you for considering these concerns,

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0219 Nicholas LaRue

**Comment:** This is a waste of money and time. We cannot build our way out of congestion. We need fewer cars, not slightly wider freeways. Congestion pricing and tolling is the only way to modify people's behavior. A huge component of this congestion is caused by Clark County residents driving alone. Tolling and Light Rail/BRT over the Columbia must be part of any discussion for solving the Portland/Vancouver/Beaverton area's congestion. Any solution that induces demand to drive is not a solution at all. The no build alternative will do just as much to reduce congestion as the build alternative and options. Let's save our money and efforts for transportation solutions of this century, not last's.

**Attachments:** N/A



## 2019 0312 Nicholas Swanson

**Comment:** I am writing to express my opposition to the Rose Quarter freeway expansion project. This is a short sighted waste of funding that will not solve the congestion problem. It is disheartening to me that in spite of historical evidence indicating that adding lanes to freeways does not solve long term traffic congestion, our government agencies would choose to spend precious dollars in this wasteful manner. Meanwhile, orphan highways like the two that are in my neighborhood, Powell Blvd and 82nd Ave, continue to be neglected and pose serious hazards to pedestrians and cyclists. Years ago Portland took on the courageous role of being a leader to its future citizens in addition to the citizens who were around at that time, and rejected the construction of a freeway that would have doomed the community. Will Portland choose the courageous path and lead again? Or will it choose to doom a community, and one that is one of the most vulnerable in all of the state of Oregon?

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0331 Nick Baker

*General Public*

**Comment:** To whom it may concern,

I join many others including Portland Public Schools, the Albina Vision Trust, the Street Trust, the Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee, the Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Oregon Walks, and the Oregon Environmental Council in voicing concern about ODOT's proposed I-5 Rose Quarter project. "Concern," however, is putting my opposition to this project lightly. I believe the proposed I-5 Rose Quarter (I5RQ) project would be an indefensible misuse of \$450M for the following reasons:

**Congestion.** ODOT's consultants have indicated that "significant congestion will exist in 2027 on the I-5 and I-205 study cordors even wit all the improvements listed in the Regional Transportation Plan." The same study suggests that tolling is "the most effective and easiest to implement" of all concepts studied. Unlike freeway expansion and the induced demand and congestion that inevitably follow, tolling (also known as decongestion pricing) is a surefire method of beginning to ease the region's traffic congestion woes.

**Safety.** Given that widening I-5 at the Rose Quarter will not provide meaningful or lasting congestion relief, ODOT has emphasized the supposed safety outcomes of the project. The high number of crashes observed in the project area, however, belie the fact that this stretch of freeway is safer than several far deadlier 1.7-mile stretches of ODOT-owned surface roads such as TV Highway, outer Powell Boulevard, and 82nd Avenue. Imagine all the life-saving projects ODOT could carry out along those roads with the \$450M set aside for widening I-5 at the Rose Quarter. The opportunity cost is staggering.

**Climat change.** With planetar crisis looming, Oregon is well off the pace of meeting its 2020 and 205 climate goals. Transportation makes up a growing share (currently about 40%) of the state's greenhouse gas emissions, and, despite ODOT's claims, there is no reason



to believe that the I5RQ project will do anything but increase those emissions. It should go without saying that we will not slow climate change, the preeminent threat of the 21st century, by repeating one of the 20th-century mistakes (overinvestment in fossil fuel infrastructure) that got us here in the first place. ODOT must acknowledge its role in reaching the state's climate goals and assess whether its projects move Oregon closer to achieving those goals. This project certainly doesn't.

Failure to remediate Albina impacts. Others, namely Rukaiyah Adams of the Albina Vision Trust, whom I quote below, have already made this argument in compelling fashion. I echo Adams' sentiment that the freeway lids, as currently proposed, are unable to support multistory construction and lack the "coherent street-level design and utility" needed to reconnect and restore the historically African American community that was divided and displaced when I-5 was initially constructed. Outreach, recitation, and consideration "[are] not remediation...Only remediation is remediation."

A quality at Harriet Tubman Middle School. Just as it did in the early 1960s when I-5 was first constructed, ODOT is preparing to cut away at the hillside upon which Harriet Tubman Middle School (then known as Eliot Elementary School) was founded. The highway's impacts on air quality at the school are already shocking and ODOT wants to bring cars and the toxins they emit even closer to Tubman's walls. Multimillion dollar filtration system notwithstanding, this is not acceptable.

Construction impacts. Nothing about this project makes it worth the five-year disruption it will inflict on Portlanders. And any as-of-yet undefined closure (or undisclosed covering) of the Eastbank Esplanade caused by the proposed freeway widening is unforgivable.

Active transportation and transit. It's time for ODOT to stop treating the answers—"walking, bicycling, riding transit, and, yes, decongestion pricing"—as alternatives. The Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee said it best: the I5RQ project is first and foremost a "freeway expansion, and a failed attempt to patch local connections, bicycling, walking and transit facilities back together afterward." As is too often the case with so-called transportation "improvement projects," facilities for people walking, bicycling, and riding transit are an afterthought. To make matters worse, some of the positive outcomes for people, walking, bicycling, and riding transit will likely be watered down as the design process moves forward. Portland needs more options, not fewer.

Distrust It would be hard for anyone following this project closely over the last couple of months to arrive at any conclusion other than that ODOT cannot be trusted. The levels of obfuscation and delay in providing key information to the public will not soon be forgotten. It took significant, coordinated effort to get your agency to release basic information about the project, or, in other words, do its job. Those who requested engineering drawings were falsely told on February 19 that "engineering drawings do not yet exist," which was later revealed to be untrue. Once drawings were released, important and previously-undisclosed details left the public wondering: What else

is ODOT trying to hide?



With a \$450M price tag, the I-5 Rose Quarter project should improve congestion and safety, support the Albina Vision plan, and promote active transportation. It won't. Instead, the project and its \$450M price tag will disrupt the area for half a decade, bring the freeway and its pollutants closer to Harriet Tubman Middle School, slow buses through the area, and deepen distrust in ODOT and its intentions, all to prevent a few fender benders and move Oregon further from its climate goals. None of this is acceptable, not when a revenue-generating and proven solution like decongestion pricing is on the table. Please become a true Department of Transportation, not just an agency hellbent on costly and unnecessary widening projects.

**Attachments:** [2019 0331 Nick Baker ATT](#)

## 2019 0326 Nick Burns

*General Public*

**Comment:** Other cities have not solved their traffic problems in the long term by adding more lanes to freeways. It is unrealistic to think that Portland is an exception to this trend. I am very disappointed that you have hidden reports and additional studies and only shared some of the data that has been collected. A full environmental impact statement must be shared with the community. Why not put the money towards proven options like:

- Congestion Pricing (Before widening)
- Public Transit (A MAX line to Vancouver)
- Bike Infrastructure (Have you tried biking from Vancouver, it sucks)

Adding another freeway lane is not forward thinking and future generations will not thank us for continuing to harm the planet.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0401 Nick Burns

**Comment:** Given the recent reporting around faked data, ODOT owes the citizens of Portland and surrounding areas more honesty and transparency in regard to environmental impact disclosure. Make the full reports public.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0331 Nick Cassella

**Comment:** Let's please not fool ourselves and invest in things that will increase emissions and is backed by little to no true evidence for producing the outcome it will supposedly create. Let's invest further, instead, on public transit (both incentivizing and increasing its reach here) and their modes of transportation before adding more cars to our already deteriorating climate.

**Attachments:** N/A



## 2019 0306 Nick Christensen

**Comment:** Every traffic jam is a daily protest in favor of a solution.

Include sound walls and extensive pollution mitigation. Without clean air, Lower Albina cannot thrive again.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0329 Nick Fox

**Comment:** As a resident of Irvington and a parent of future Tubman Middle School students, I write to tell you I am strongly opposed to the plan to expand the I-5 through the Rose Quarter. I know that you have released reports suggesting that this would reduce pollution for kids like mine, but I also know about induced demand--so I'm skeptical that traffic will really move faster through that tight spot. Pretty soon, we'll be back in the same place: traffic jam, but with even more cars. Given that there are more cost-effective alternatives, including congestion pricing and dedicated transit lanes, I cannot support the project or the money to be spent.

Thank you for considering these concerns

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0313 Nick Gross

*General Public*

**Comment:** As a resident of Portland, I am writing to express my opposition of the I-5 Rose Corridor Widening Project. Thank you

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0219 Nick Sauvie

*ROSE Community Development*

**Comment:** I am the Executive Director of ROSE Community Development, a nonprofit that has been working to revitalize outer southeast Portland neighborhoods for more than 25 years. I oppose the Rose Quarter freeway expansion because it will not reduce traffic congestion but it will make global warming worse. There are much better ways to spend half a billion dollars of transportation investment. Improving transit service and improving streets, sidewalks and bicycle facilities in East Portland for example. Finally, given ODOT's track record with another freeway expansion - the Columbia Crossing - the final price tag is likely to be much higher than advertised.

**Attachments:** N/A



## 2019 0401 Nick Tiller

**Comment:** To whom it may concern,

As a resident of Portland, I strongly oppose the freeway expansion plan. Studies have shown that it won't help congestion, but will instead make it worse. Considering that, and that our environmental quality is on a steep decline, why would we want to do something that's going to have a worse impact on both nature and our traffic problem??

Thanks,

Nick

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0329 Nick Wood

**Comment:** Numerous studies have shown that expanding capacity is a short-term fix for congestion at best, and a complete waste of public funds at worst. Please consider using my tax dollars for positive uses like expanding express bus service and creating dedicated bus lanes on bridges across the Willamette.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0325 Nicolas Lennartz

**Comment:** To Whom It May Concern, I am generally concerned about and oppose the approval of this transportation project's funding for the following reasons: 1. Transportation findings say that 'crashes are reduced' but based on research those crashes are usually not fatal, and there are areas where fatal crashes happen far more often. 82nd Ave and Powell Blvd just to name a couple of ROW's that are far more dangerous. Vision Zero is the goal and I don't see it being addressed with the allocation of this project's funding. 2. Nothing in the findings mention ADT, and there appears to be a lack of evidence that the project will increase the efficiency of the freeway. Findings say speed, travel times and queues 'improve' but how much? And that local street efficiency essentially remain the same. So, it's really only about the highway and, nothing I see is concrete improvement in performance. So, what's the project for? 3. The Clackamas Crossing looks like someone's architecture thesis, in that it completely forgets the human component that walking on an elevated walkway with no storefronts or anything of interest is enjoyable. It doesn't connect popular destinations as much as it allows cars to 'not have to worry about the humans living in this City' as they try to get through as fast as possible. I think any pedestrian thorough-fare should be an interesting and safe walk at grade, with convenient destinations throughout. Not some 'let's put the humans in this lane' pedestrian freeway concept. A more integrated pedestrian network would be ideal. 4. 22% emissions reductions over 25 years is very misleading. Based on the graphics provided, there is



realistically no impact on emissions with or without the project. The project appears to sell the green initiative but there's not any benefit as far as I can see. 5. It appears to be minimal per the EA, but any reduction in transit efficiency, either bus or rail, is a bad idea. More signalization would decrease the efficiency of the bus system, and create more stops for cyclists. Any project in this area should be a net improvement in all multi-modal forms of transportation, and hey, that includes the car, which again, doesn't appear to get much benefit from this project in terms of tangibles. 6. In general, I see this project as very well-intentioned but ultimately missing purpose. I've driven this section of freeway probably 500+ times and yes, it's wonky, but it's not the end of the world, and there are bigger fish to fry. At a time we could really use money for public infrastructure improvements, this is not the area that deserves it most. I would love to see Portland remain a nationwide leader in multi-modal prioritization, and ODOT should be at the forefront of that effort; not the opponent. I hope you consider these concerns in the decision making process for this project. Thanks for reading!

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0331 Nicholas Peterson

*General Public*

**Comment:** Please do not widen I-5 in Portland. Please do not spend \$500M on roads that will significantly degrade public transit and public spaces. What is needed is more transit and more green, community spaces in Portland. Marginalized communities in Portland will be the first to feel the effects of freeway emissions, as they have historically, and this needs to stop.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0227 Nicole

**Comment:** The proposed freeway expansion will do more harm than good. It is a short sighted solution to a very large issue about congestion, environment, and quality of life. The expansion may reduce traffic initially but not for long and will take away a middle school and property that is community to many minorities. Please consider bus on shoulder, HOV lanes, and other solutions to solve this problem. Do not expand the freeway.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0226 Nicole Cousino

**Comment:** In a city that branded itself on sustainability and progressive values and practices, its shocking to learn this same city would consider an approach to addressing congestion through freeway expansion. Build it and they will come. Any funds and efforts should go towards getting commuters out of their cars, not more cars on the road. Please don't allow small minded, archaic and self serving concepts guide decision making. Be a bold city with vision and strategies for a livable future. More freeway space is so wrong for Portland!



**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0402 Nichole Funke

**Comment:** Freeways are the poorest investment we can make for ourselves as commuters. Bridge upgrades, dedicated bike lanes, light rail and improved bus service should be our focus. We should make alternative transportation easier, safer and more enjoyable than driving. Only then will we be able to get people into the habit of rethinking their method of commuting. I look at cities like Vancouver BC (light rail expansion, buses for days) and so many European cities that promote cycling and train over cars.

Building and expanding freeways is a band-aid on a bigger problem that we are merely kicking down the road. Lets address this now by putting our money in alternative transportation.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0311 Nichole Safranek

**Comment:** I am a public school teacher living in SE portland. I bike to work to reduce my carbon footprint and my contribution to congestion. A freeway expansion plan isnt the right move for Portland if we want to stay green and neighborhood friendly. Portland shouldn't even consider freeway expansion without significant simultaneous investment in mass transit and bike infrastructure. Pedal power, shared transit, and walkable city neighborhoods is the future portland deserves, not more noise, pollution and fossil fuel consumption. This freeway plan sounds like a bandaid solution and a comittment to business as usual greenhouse gas emissions. Where is the vision for a healthy sustainable city?

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0402 Nicole Thompson

**Comment:** I've lived in this city for 25 years, long enough to witness the growing pains associated with rapid growth. While I don't begrudge our burgeoning population, I do think we simply cannot go with 20th century solutions for 21st century problems. Portland deserves a smart growth plan that employs a sustainable mindset to better serve her citizens in the future.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0305 Nikki Dennis

**Comment:** I oppose this project. New freeways are not the answer and do not solve traffic congestion. Additionally, a new freeway will contribute significantly to more air pollution - something Oregonians, especially Portlanders, are plagued with already due to shortsighted decisions such as these. Oregon must move forward and select climate-friendly solutions that



do not destroy additional habitats, encroach on existing communities, or make a bad situation even worse. The Green Deal proposes increasing railways to make the need for freeways obsolete. These are the ways we must begin thinking going forward. It is time that you listen to citizens and keep their best interests at heart. This does not do that and any attempts to rationalize it or portray it as such are irresponsible, narrow-minded, and archaic by design.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0326 Nikos Syropoulos

**Comment:** I am writing to express my forceful opposition to the proposed I-5 freeway expansion in the Rose Quarter. Considering induced demand, an investment in freeway expansion is short-sighted, as the marginal benefits will be very short-lived. The misuse of equity appears to be a willful and harmful misunderstanding. I urge you to put resources toward solutions that are actually proven to improve safety, congestion, air quality, and equity.

I further urge you to conduct a robust environmental impact statement. Considering the magnitude of the proposed project, increased transparency is vital.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0325 Nitya Brorson

**Comment:** This freeway expansion is antithetical to our commitment to bring Portland's emissions down to net-zero. The increased pollutants will also further poison a neighborhood that has been repeatedly injured and displaced by racist city-planning. Do you really want to hurt that same neighborhood \*again\*? And poison all those children at Harriet Tubman Elementary? Widened freeways create induced demand, so more people will drive on them. Traffic will continue to congest, and all that exhaust from crawling cars will continue to poison the air for our entire city. You should instead be focused on making public transportation something that is more efficient, and appealing for more commuters to use. Stop catering to car culture, and putting the needs of frequent freeway users over the needs of everybody else in the city, and the health of everyone, and our planet.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0313 NMF

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Re: I-5 Rose Quarter: Response to Data Request.

Thank you! We saw it about an hour ago and we're already digging in. If we have any further questions you know we'll reach out shortly.

**Attachments:** N/A



## 2019 0331 NMF 1

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Press Coverage of Opposition to Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion.

Journalism related to the campaign in opposition to the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion is attached. We wish to submit these articles into the Public Comment record to document the years of community opposition to this proposed freeway expansion.

**Attachments:** [2019 0331 NMF 1 ATT](#)

## 2019 0331 NMF 2

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Press Coverage of Opposition to Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion (1/x).

Journalism related to the campaign in opposition to the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion is attached. We wish to submit these articles into the Public Comment record to document the years of community opposition to this proposed freeway expansion.

**Attachments:** [2019 0331 NMF 2 ATT](#)

## 2019 0331 NMF 3

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Press Coverage of Opposition to Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion (2/3)

**Attachments:** [2019 0331 NMF 3 ATT](#)

## 2019 0331 NMF 4

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Press Coverage (3/3) for submission into ODOT's public record on the I-5 Rose Quarter Freeway Widening Project:

**Attachments:** [2019 0331 NMF 4 ATT](#)

## 2019 0331 NMF 5

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** NMF Public Comment Records (08/2017-04/2019).

We wish to submit for the public record of ODOT's Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion the letters of correspondence between No More Freeways and ODOT, the OTC and Portland City Council since our group's inception in 2017.

**Attachments:** [2019 0331 NMF 5 ATT](#)



## 2019 0331 NMF 6

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Four additional documents to submit for public record.

Two documents referenced in numerous NMF letters about the equity concerns of congestion pricing, PBOT's bike count summary from 2018 showing bike traffic on the existing Flint Avenue Bridge, and an additional academic article cited in a previous NMF letter to ODOT.

**Attachments:** [2019 0331 NMF 6 ATT](#)

## 2019 0331 NMF 7

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Article in Columbian for Public Record

**Attachments:** [2019 0331 NMF 7 ATT](#)

## 2019 0401 NMF 1

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** Bleeding Albina. For public record on the ODOT Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion Project.

**Attachments:** [2019 0401 NMF 1 ATT](#)

## 2019 0401 NMF 2

*No More Freeways*

**Comment:** No More Freeways Letter - ODOT Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion Public Comment. Please find our letter attached for the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion Public Comment.

The No More Freeway Expansions Coalition is writing to submit our organization's official public comment in opposition to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion project. The freeway expansion project proposed in ODOT's Environmental Assessment (EA) document (and the agency's subsequent lackluster commitment to public engagement) are simply inadequate to address the numerous mobility, public health, and climate-related challenges that Oregonians are counting on government institutions to tackle through courageous leadership.

Given the numerous inadequacies with the EA, the No More Freeway Expansions Coalition joins the numerous educators, public health specialists, environmentalists, neighborhood leaders, transportation advocates, frontline communities, climate-hawks and elected officials demanding that ODOT conduct an Environmental Impact Statement that more appropriately studies the concerns raised by a plethora of community organizations before proceeding with



this proposal. What follows is an overarching summary of the numerous failures of this project to address the Portland region's mobility needs, public health concerns or moral responsibility to shift investments away from fossil fuel infrastructure that greatly imperil current and future generations of Oregonians.

Freeway Expansion Has Never Solved Traffic Congestion (and ODOT's claims this project is any difference is based on questionable traffic modeling)

Among urban planners and traffic engineers, the concept of "induced demand," that suggests that widening roads and freeways simply encourages more driving that inevitably fills the additional lanes with new traffic congestion, is accepted as a well-known and commonly understood phenomenon. The validity of this concept is backed by a nearly unanimous body of academic literature spanning decades of research on transportation planning and urban economics. In only the most recent prominent example, a \$1.6 billion freeway widening project to address what was described as a "bottleneck" on Los Angeles' I-405 actually made traffic congestion worse when the project was completed.

Traffic congestion in our region is undeniably miserable, and poses a significant threat to the public health, economic vitality, and livability of our region. It is therefore imperative that we pursue transportation policies and investments that meaningfully tackle the problem. ODOT's claims that this proposed freeway expansion would somehow improve traffic congestion - lined throughout their promotional materials of the EA document - implies that somehow the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion would be the first expansion in recent history to improve congestion. Therefore, when the No More Freeway Expansions coalition was finally granted access to enough traffic modeling data to meaningfully conduct an independent assessment of ODOT's findings (more on our frustrations with ODOT's public process and community engagement later), we rigorously studied the projections to understand how ODOT came to the conclusion this project was uniquely capable of solving traffic gridlock.

Turns out, ODOT's project staff arrived at this conclusion by putting their fingers on the scales and hoping no one would notice. There are numerous questionable assumptions baked into ODOT's traffic modeling, but the two most significant are the inclusion of the Columbia River Crossing and the exclusion of congestion pricing.

- Inclusion of Columbia River Crossing: The inclusion of the Columbia River Crossing Project (CRC) in ODOT's traffic projections artificially inflate the agency's traffic projections, making the need for the Rose Quarter Expansion more viable than it would otherwise. This proposed 12 lane freeway bridge was pronounced dead by legislators in 2014 after continued disagreement between Washington and Oregon state legislators about cost and design, notably about the project's inclusion of tolling and light rail. Despite recent murmurs from Washington legislators hoping to revive the project, it's difficult to conceive of any realistic timeline in which a new effort to build a similarly-designed CRC would be approved and constructed within the next decade at minimum. By including this failed, \$3 billion project in the assumptions used for ODOT's traffic modeling on this corridor over the next 25 years, ODOT directed a firehose of expected automobile traffic at the Rose Quarter, essentially modeling a "problem" in which an expansion of the Rose Quarter freeway would be necessary to "solve."



- Exclusion of Congestion Pricing - House Bill 2017, the transportation package passed by the Oregon Legislature back in 2017, included both funding for the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion and explicit policy language directing ODOT to move forward with feasibility studies to implement value pricing (also known as congestion pricing or decongestion pricing) on major freeways in the Portland Metropolitan area. In the past year, ODOT studied Value Pricing and received approval to proceed with the policy from a Value Pricing Stakeholder Advisory Committee assembled to review the literature and from the federal government, which granted approval for ODOT to move to the next steps of implementation this past January. Elected officials across the region have signaled their strong support for implementation of value pricing. The academic literature (and the studies that ODOT commissioned for the Value Pricing Stakeholder Advisory Committee) overwhelmingly suggests that implementation of the policy has an enormous impact on traffic congestion. <<Footnote 1>> Given the bipartisan support for value pricing, the overwhelming academic literature suggesting its efficacy as a policy mechanism and ODOT's own research suggesting the applicability of this policy initiative to this specific stretch of freeway, it is baffling that that ODOT's traffic modeling for the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion were conducted without any consideration as to how congestion pricing would impact these projections. ODOT appears to be moving forward with the next steps of value pricing implementation in foreseeable future. We therefore question the validity of the traffic projections that ODOT is using to justify the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion, given that the EA document projects traffic volumes out to 2045 and does not consider the substantial impacts that value pricing is likely to have on this project. It's difficult to understand how ODOT can be certain about the accuracy of these traffic projections and this proposed expansion's impact on travel times over the next 25 years without factoring in a forthcoming policy initiative likely to dramatically impact travel patterns.

Whether due to incompetence, negligence, or outright deliberate malfeasance, it is difficult to avoid skepticism that the traffic modeling (on which ODOT's entire case for this \$500 million project rests) was conducted by the agency accurately or in objective good faith. The claims based on these faulty projections deceive the public and obfuscate crucial details that challenge ODOT's assertion this freeway expansion is justified and would provide any benefit to motorists frustrated with traffic gridlock. Our independent team reviewing the data made available found it near impossible to replicate ODOT's findings and trace their work to come to their conclusions.

The above is our best attempts at describing in layman's terms the impact that assumptions baked into ODOT's traffic modeling. The No More Freeways Traffic Modeling Team produced a technical memo that provides more specific detail as to the numerous flaws in these projections that should disqualify these findings. This document has also been submitted for public comment, and is available on the No More Freeways website. <<Footnote 2>>

40% of Oregon's Carbon Emissions are from the Transportation Sector. This Freeway Expansion is Climate Change Denial.

ODOT's demonstrably questionable traffic projections suggesting that this freeway expansion will improve traffic congestion have also been extrapolated by the agency to suggest that the freeway widening will also lower carbon emissions because of fewer cars idling while stuck in



traffic. Unfortunately, this claim by the agency is similarly disingenuous. Squandering half a billion dollars widening a mile of freeway is an egregious form of reckless climate denialism.

Last month's reporting by The Oregonian suggests that even with passage of pending carbon legislation, Oregon won't hit carbon reduction targets without fundamentally reducing emissions from private automobiles. Transportation emissions already comprise 40% of Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions, and it's the only sector of Oregon's economy where emissions are increasing. Despite increasingly rigorous GHG emissions requirements for cars and light trucks, the transportation-related GHGs contribution to the State's GHG emissions rose from 35% in 2014 due to increased vehicle-miles travelled. The region's population is forecasted to increase by 390,000 people by 2050, and it is imperative that we develop a transportation network that accommodates these new residents without any additional vehicle miles traveled and any increase in associated emissions. It's simply disingenuous to invest half a billion dollars in a freeway expansion project in the center of Oregon's densest city and claim that this project has any benefits to carbon reduction, especially given the project's abysmal contributions to walking, biking, and transit options in the neighborhood (see below). It is frustrating to watch ODOT champion freeway expansion when 40% of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation. Expansion of this freeway represents a complicit willingness to ignore Oregon's responsibility to future generations and the planet.

We've all felt the unease that permeates our communities when our neighborhoods are cloaked with the wildfire smoke that has draped itself through the Willamette Valley three of the past four summers. Last October's IPCC report warned that phasing out fossil fuels in eleven years was essential to avoiding the destruction of society as we know it. It's unconscionable to imagine that this freeway expansion is the best transportation investment we can make to honor the need to protect Oregon for current and future generations when the impacts of climate change are already here, and will almost certainly only get worse.

Oregon-based environmental stewards and advocates including Portland Audubon Society, Oregon Environmental Council, 350 PDX, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Center for Sustainable Economy, OPAL - Environmental Justice Oregon, and the Urban Greenspaces Institute have all asked ODOT to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement and stated their concern about this project's impacts on greenhouse gas emissions. <<Footnote 3>>

ODOT's claims to traffic safety, "surface level" improvements are disingenuous

Please do not be fooled by ODOT's claims that the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion is an "Improvement Project" with "multimodal investments" and benefits for people biking, walking, or taking transit. Unanimous opposition to and concern about this project has been voiced by transportation advocates across the Portland region, including Oregon Walks, The Street Trust, Community Cycling Center, Oregon Families for Safe Streets, BikeLoudPDX, the City of Portland's Bicycle Advisory Committee and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Portland Bus Lane Project, Safe Routes to School - Pacific Northwest Chapter, and AORTA. <<Footnote 4>>

These organizations and citizen advisory committees have written long, detailed, thoughtful letters for ODOT's Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion public comment highlighting the surface street-level flaws within ODOT's proposal. The Bicycle Advisory Committee wrote that "the Build



Alternative would fail to achieve the stated project goals and objectives, especially in critical areas related to bicycling, but also including the resulting conditions for walking and transit, local connectivity, safety, equity, and climate outcomes. This is in direct conflict with city and state planning goals.” We will be posting many of these letters in full on the No More Freeways website in the next few days; a brief summary of the most frequently-cited concerns is listed below:

- ODOT claims that this project is a “safety improvement” for the freeway. However, there hasn’t been a traffic fatality on this stretch of freeway in over a decade. Meanwhile, ODOT has numerous other arterials and orphan highways across the region that are very dangerous to people walking, biking, and driving. Just this past month, during the public comment period, a sixteen year old student at Madison High School was hit by a car while crossing 82nd Avenue. It’s disingenuous to sell this freeway widening project as a traffic safety project when there are numerous other arterials that have much more demonstrable need for traffic safety investments. Doing so is directly antithetical to the City of Portland’s Vision Zero initiative, passed in 2015, that uses a data-driven approach to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2025.

- TriMet’s 4 and 44 bus lanes actually experience slower travel times through the corridor under the “Build” alternative. We simply cannot spend half a billion dollars on a transportation investment in the center of the biggest city in Oregon that actually makes public transit less efficient and viable an option, given the overwhelming relevance of excellent provision of public transit to air quality, anti-poverty, and decarbonization goals. Many groups requested ODOT to implement more transit-priority lanes through the corridor.

- The Rose Quarter plan calls for the removal of the Flint Avenue Bridge, a popular route for bike commuters, with one of the highest volumes of weekday morning bicycle traffic. Meanwhile, the proposed “replacement,” a east-west connection on Hancock, is too steep to be ADA compliant (10%), and the proposed crossing has abysmal bike/pedestrian amenities. The proposed crossing on Clackamas is also largely panned as largely irrelevant to existing and expected future bike/ped patterns. Other groups cited national standards including the AASHTO bikeway design manual, the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and Oregon Highway Design Manual noting the inadequacies of the bicycle and pedestrian plans.

- Significant concerns that ODOT’s EA doesn’t address how expected construction detours will significantly impact biking and walking throughout the numerous years of construction. The Street Trust writes in their letter that they are “alarmed by the likely impact on walking, biking and transit during the construction period and the lack of information in the EA about how this will be mitigated... Extraordinary efforts will need to be taken to mitigate the huge disruption that will be caused by the construction of the project in an area that sees 8,000 cyclists per day and is the primary portal between downtown and North and Northeast Portland. A five-year setback is not an acceptable outcome for our climate change and growth management goals nor is it acceptable to the individuals who will be impacted.”

- An overall level of disgust with the opportunity cost of this project, and what \$500 million could buy for other investments that would meaningfully provide safe places to walk, bike, and take transit across the city. \$250 million would build safe routes to school for every public school in



the city of Portland. The May 2016 Fixing Our Streets Gas Tax was estimated to raise \$64 million for crucially needed investments in backlogged road maintenance and traffic safety improvements. \$500 million is roughly analogous to what TriMet receives from commuters over four years on farebox revenue, and is comparable to the cost of TriMet purchasing an entirely new, all-electric bus fleet.

As BikeLoudPDX wrote in their letter opposing this project, “Future study and proposals for this freeway expansion must significantly improve the proposed active transportation infrastructure plans, demonstrate a more rigorous active transportation design standards methodology, be able to show that delays during the estimated five year construction period not significantly impact active transportation and transit in the project area.”

Similarly, ODOT’s claims that they are working closely with local community partners are countered by letters submitted to public comment by the Albina Vision Trust, Eliot Neighborhood Association and Irvington Community Association. The No More Freeway Expansions Coalition stands in firm solidarity with the efforts of the Albina Vision to build a vibrant, dense, walkable neighborhood in the wake of the twentieth-century urban renewal that decimated Oregon’s largest black neighborhood. The Albina Vision point out that the “lids” over the freeway are not strong enough to build multiple stories of housing and office space, as their organization intends for the neighborhood. The Albina Vision Trust has asked ODOT for an Environmental Impact Statement, and both the Irvington CA and Eliot NA have written strongly worded letters opposing this project on numerous grounds and also asking ODOT for an Environmental Impact Statement. <<Footnote 5>>

Freeways make children sick. ODOT is widening I-5 into the backyard of Harriet Tubman Middle School. Yikes.

ODOT’s proposed Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion involves widening Interstate 5 farther East into to Portland Public Schools’ (PPS’) Harriet Tubman Middle School campus. Harriet Tubman reopened to students in September 2018; both Portland Public Schools as an entity and parents, students, teachers, and staff from the Tubman community have come out in opposition to this project and asking ODOT for a full Environmental Impact Statement to more appropriately understand the impacts this project would have on their neighborhood school.

According to PPS’ data, just under half of Harriet Tubman’s students qualify for free and reduced price meals. Only 31.4% of Harriet Tubman students identify as white

- this is the 2nd lowest percentage of a middle school campus out of the thirteen in the district. 40% of Harriet Tubman’s students identify at black - the third highest of any PPS campus across all grade levels. Youth are particularly susceptible to lung diseases.

<< TABLE INCLUDED IN LETTER, SOURCE: 2018-2019 PPS Demographics, Footnote 6>>

Air quality researchers at Portland State University released a report in April 2018 expressing their concerns about the high levels of air pollution at Harriet Tubman Middle School. The first recommendation of the report stated that “student outdoor activities be limited at Harriet Tubman Middle School, especially during high traffic periods.” The report found levels of acrolein, benzene, and naphthalene higher than Oregon’s Ambient Benchmark Concentrations.



Nearly 18,000 diesel-powered trucks pass by Tubman on a daily basis - as of March 2019, Oregon has by far the weakest diesel regulations on the West Coast. The report was clear: “the primary risks to future occupants of Tubman MS related to ambient air quality are due to freeway emissions.<<Footnote 7>>”

Willamette Week reported on this finding, and quoted PSU’s Dr. Linda George saying that “It’s very reasonable to expect concentrations would be higher and extend further into the property” if the freeway was widened into the backyard of the campus.

This report is bolstered by other findings. Late last year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published their most recent iteration of the National Air Toxics Assessment, which reflected conditions in 2014. EPA ranked census tract 23.03 (the tract at Tubman) as the seventh highest of risk for cancer of any in Oregon (census tracts 22.03 and 21 are similarly high). All three rank among the top ten in the state, and this is almost certainly an underestimate - the EPA doesn’t recognize diesel particulate as a carcinogen, so it’s not fully included in the estimate.

As Harriet Tubman parents write in a letter submitted to ODOT’s Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion public comment, “As parents of students who breathe the polluted air, we are the ones forced to live with the repercussions of these decisions. It’s our material and physical loss when we are forced to buy inhalers for our children when they are diagnosed with asthma, and it’s our children who suffer these very real health consequences. It’s our faculty and staff who are always wondering if a headache is just an occasional migraine or a symptom of something more nefarious, due to the particulates in the air from the nearby freeway. It’s our right and responsibility to demands a fierce, rational approach to ensuring this Middle School is a safe and healthy learning environment.” Their letter also notes the difficulty the school community is already facing at recruiting families to attend the school, and worry that the expansion will further deter families from sending their students to the facility when the campus needs sustained population growth for it to succeed.

The overwhelming academic literature on air pollution from transportation suggests that decongestion pricing, and not freeway expansion, is the best policy to improve local air pollutants and mitigate the impacts of freeways on their surrounding communities. According to The Washington Post, childhood asthma rates in Stockholm, Sweden were reduced by nearly fifty percent after the implementation of decongestion pricing. Dr. Alex Bigazzi’s research, the body of which has been submitted to ODOT’s public record for this project, highlights the numerous studies that suggest the best way to improve the air quality at Tubman Middle School is to institute congestion pricing instead of widening the freeway.

By not studying congestion pricing, ODOT is not considering the easiest, most cost-effective policy to address traffic congestion that the scientific consensus also recognizes is the most likely to improve air quality in the Tubman community. ODOT’s projections of improved air quality in the area under the “build” scenario are also based on assumptions about improvements in technology and local air quality regulations - assumptions the agency is unable to promise will happen.



The full letter from the Portland Public School board detailing their concerns about this project explains how the district was unable, on ODOT's shortened time-frame, to study the other impacts this proposed expansion might have on the campus, including not only air quality but traffic impacts, soil stability, noise, and other factors. As the resolution passed unanimously by PPS Board Members states, "it is PPS's position that the depth, complexity and severity of potential significant short and long term negative impacts to PPS facilities, staff, students, families, and stakeholders warrants a full environmental impact statement (EIS). An EIS will provide a better understanding of the impacts of the proposal and development of potential mitigation options." <<Footnote 8>>

There are significant environmental justice implications with ODOT rushing through this freeway expansion into the backyard of Harriet Tubman in direct opposition to the local community's wishes. Further poisoning the air so that low income students of color are unable to enjoy outdoor recess is the diametric opposite to the Albina Vision Trust's aim to undertake a restorative initiative to rebuild a prosperous community, and is enormously detrimental to Portland Public Schools' efforts to provide a safe learning environment for every student.

ODOT's Community Engagement Plans Were, Frankly, Abysmal

The No More Freeways Coalition, along with dozens of organizations and small business owners, requested an extension of the public comment period November 30th. This request was denied by ODOT in mid January; we only got a public hearing out of the event due to pressure from Commissioner Chloe Eudaly's office, and ODOT didn't provide video recording of the event despite having done so for numerous other recent public hearings for Value Pricing and Oregon Transportation Commission hearings.

When the Environmental Assessment document was released on February 15th, it was missing numerous technical documents central to ODOT's claims about the efficacy of this project to address congestion, air pollution or carbon emissions. We sent ODOT a letter asking for these data on February 23rd, and only received part of what we asked for on March 13th, the day after the public hearing. We then sent ODOT a letter asking ODOT to honor their original commitment to a 45 day public comment period, and we were once again denied.

Numerous letters from advocacy organizations, including that from Portland Public Schools, noted the abbreviated public comment time made it difficult to evaluate the project, especially given the enormous consequences this project represents to the community, region, and state. ODOT ignored all of these requests. Separately, community member Iain MacKenzie sent ODOT an email on February 15th asking for access to relevant engineering drawings for this project. ODOT responded that "they do not yet exist," a statement that was demonstrably untrue. It took over a month to obtain the drawings that could have easily been published when they were first requested.

These schematics were enormously valuable in allowing community members to understand the specific impacts the proposed project would have on treasured community resources, including the expansion of the freeway over the Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade. <<Footnote 9>> Mr. MacKenzie submitted public testimony providing a detail and copy of email records of his correspondence with the agency.<<Footnote 10>>



Given the agency's general recalcitrance to share information about the project, unwillingness to hold meaningful public forums about the project, denial of repeated requests for extension of the public comment period, and numerous deceptions included in the traffic analysis, the No More Freeways Coalition wishes to state our loud disapproval and concern with the way a public agency ostensibly serving constituents engaged with concerned community members. Especially here in Oregon, where we celebrate our regional livability we've earned through rigorous community engagement, public process and commitment to environmental stewardship, it's remarkably disheartening to watch the Oregon Department of Transportation brazenly push this project through public process with disingenuous data, Orwellian language, and disinterest in meaningful partnership with community partners. The ability for current and future generations to enjoy Tom McCall's Eden is dependant on community leaders, elected officials and government bodies collaboratively working together to decarbonize our economy, prioritize investments that safeguard frontline communities, and double down on public health initiatives.

The Oregon Department of Transportation's Environmental Assessment proposal of this Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion fundamentally fails our local neighborhood, our city, our region, our state, and our planet on every single one of these fronts, as the approximately 800 letters from angry community members attests. We urge this project be scrapped, that ODOT be forced to undertake an Environmental Impact Statement, and that our regional elected officials take notice: The Oregon Department of Transportation is an emperor wearing no clothes. If we have any meaningful commitment to alleviating gridlock and congestion, eradicating the senseless violence of traffic fatalities, improving air quality so school doesn't make kids sick, restoring a neighborhood scarred by the worst racist impulses of our forefathers, or tackling climate change for current and future generations, this project must be abandoned. The Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion mega-project has no place in our community.

#### FOOTNOTES:

1 We also wish to acknowledge that there are legitimate regressivity concerns with the potential implementation of congestion pricing, as with any policy proposal that raises revenue. The No More Freeways Coalition has written letters to the Oregon Transportation Commission, the Value Pricing Advisory Committee, and the City of Portland outlining how congestion pricing can be implemented fairly, and they are included in the public record. (In short, it involves including low-income exemptions for working class commuters and directing revenue raised from pricing into transit investments and not further freeway expansion). We believe that ODOT should work closely with frontline communities and anti-poverty advocates to ensure this policy is implemented in a manner that provides meaningful benefits to working class Oregonians and SW Washingtonians.

2 The Technical Memo is posted on our website here:

[https://nomorefreewayspx.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/nmf\\_technical\\_memo.pdf](https://nomorefreewayspx.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/nmf_technical_memo.pdf)

3 Letters from these organizations submitted for public comment will be available on the No More Freeways website within the next week.



4 Letters from these organizations submitted for public comment will be available on the No More Freeways website within the next week.

5 Letters from these organizations submitted for public comment will be available on the No More Freeways website within the next week.

6 These data are taken from the Tubman parents community letter, which cites specific PPS demographic tables available online, and is submitted for ODOT's public comment on the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion. We will provide a link to the Tubman community letter on the No More Freeways website in the next week.

7 This report, and numerous others about the impacts that air pollution have on student health and academic performance, is included in the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion Public Comment Record.

8 This memo has been submitted to ODOT's Public Comment, and will be available on the No More Freeways website within the next week.

9 The Portland Audubon Society's letter, in particular, explores the significant lack of information in the EA about the necessary construction mitigation plans, particularly for the plans to build in the Willamette River along the southern edge of the project. This letter has been submitted to the Public Comment record, and will be available on the No More Freeways website in the next week.

10 His letter is available here:

<https://nomorefreewayspx.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/i5-rose-quarter-letter-1-1.pdf>

**Attachments:** [2019 0401 NMF 2 ATT](#)

## 2019 0329 Noah Brimhall

**Comment:** I've been keenly interested in the I-5 Rose Quarter project since I first heard about it a couple of years ago. As someone who lives in North Portland and works in Downtown Portland, I travel through the project area on a daily basis. Most often I do this by bus (Line #44), but in nicer weather, I enjoy riding my bike to work. I also frequently travel by car through the project area, especially on weekends. I've delayed making a comment on the projects Environmental Assessment for nearly the entire comment period because I felt that the EA as presented was incomplete and that as the comment period went on there would likely be new information that would come to light that might impact my comment. It turns out I was right! I'd like to break my commentary into 3 primary areas, 1) deficiencies in the EA as presented 2) the local environmental impact of the project 3) the global environmental context in which the project exists.

1. Deficiencies in the EA: Although ODOT was only required to complete an EA for this project, I believe that ODOT should revisit its decision to not complete a more thorough Environmental Impact Statement. During the all too brief 30-day comment period for the EA, it is clear that the EA is built on a number of false assumptions, a number of which came up only in the last few days. For example, recently revealed maps (which ODOT first claimed did not exist, then



attempted to charge an exorbitant amount for and finally released only days before the end of the comment period) show that expanded off-ramps that are part of the project would negatively impact the Eastbank Esplanade. It also recently came to light that both the "build" and "no build" options detailed in the EA assume that a larger multi-billion dollar freeway expansion and bridge over the Columbia River north of the project area will be built. A realistic EA would include a "build" and "no-build" analysis that doesn't assume that another project will be built, especially since the other project is not currently planned or even in serious consideration. I would request that the FHWA require ODOT to complete an EIS that includes at least three different "build" / "no build" scenarios: 1) One with no reference to any Columbia River Bridge related freeway expansion; 2) One that considers the possibility of congestions pricing 3) One that considers the Columbia River Bridge related freeway expansion (but I'd be OK with leaving out that last one).

2. Local Environmental Impact: There is widespread opposition to this project locally in the Portland area from groups that understand this project will have a negative environmental impact on the surrounding area. Because any increased capacity is likely to be filled due to induced demand, there is likely to be a significant local increase in air pollution. This will negatively impact people living, working, studying and traveling through the area. As someone who bikes through the project area, I'm concerned that the increase in pollution associated with the project will make my healthy choice to bike to work significantly less healthy. I'm also concerned for the students at the nearby Harriet Tubman Middle School who have already been advised to not to enjoy an outside recess due to the impact of air pollution. Finally, I don't think the project does enough to positively impact those who use transit, bike or walk through the project area. There is no prioritization for transit in the project area, bike facilities are worse than the existing conditions and walking will be harder and more dangerous in the project area. I urge the FHWA to reject this project outright based on the significant negative impact on the local environment.

3. Global Environmental Context - Climate change is real and spending significant (at least \$500 M) amounts of money on a freeway project is de fact climate denialism. ODOT has an opportunity to use its resources on projects that decrease the 40% of carbon emissions that come from the transportation sector, but the "build" option in this project does nothing to discourage people using single-occupancy vehicles or to encourage active transportation through the project area. We are headed towards a global environmental crisis and history will not look kindly on a city or state that chose to spend half a billion dollars on a freeway expansion at the verge of collapse. I would ask that the FHWA require ODOT to redesign this project to both discourage single-occupancy vehicular traffic and strongly encourage transit and active transit through the project area.

I appreciate the opportunity to publicly comment on this project's EA. Despite the fact that the comment period was too limited and the EA was incomplete, I believe that ODOT and FHWA will receive valuable feedback from the community during this comment period. I once again urge the FHWA to send this project back to the drawing board for both a redesign and and full EIS so that the community can better understand the impact of a project in this area.



**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0331 Noah Emmet

*General Public*

**Comment:** I am writing to express my disapproval to the proposed Rose Quarter Freeway expansion. I find it ridiculous that we

are considering increasing traffic and pollution in a time of catastrophic climate change, and ask that further study

on the environmental impact be taken.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0313 Noah Hatz

**Comment:** I oppose the Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion for the following reasons:

1 - It won't work. I grew up in Hillsboro and lived through years and years of freeway expansion. How did that work out? Induced demand filled those roads right back up and the commute is worse than it ever was.

2 - It's the wrong solution. As a city we need to commit to de-carbonizing all parts of our life, which means a heavy focus on moving people via transit/foot/bike. Spending \$500 million on cars while ignoring mass transit, bikes, and pedestrians is ass-backwards.

3 - It's yet another slap to the face of Portland's black community. Expanding a freeway at the expense of a neighborhood's health is another example of the city prioritizing the needs of white, wealthy people (not even Portland residents!) over its black residents.

4 - The city doesn't want this. A "lid" over the freeway isn't going to magically become some place where community connects. It will be a slightly larger overpass, the bike/pedestrian lanes as designed suck and were clearly designed by someone who doesn't walk or bike.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0219 Noah Horst

**Comment:** Evidence shows that freeway expansion does not alleviate highway congestion. We should not build more lanes when we are in the middle of a climate crisis awakening in a city with vast support for alternative transit. Further, children of color in historically ignored neighborhoods will once again bear the brunt of city policies that fail to consider those children and the long term health effects that will be created by adding more lanes and more autos to i-5. I am proud to be a member of a community that fought other freeway expansions successfully and to much acclaim. History will judge us for our actions on this project and looking back 20



years from now, we will all be happier and healthier if we build and spend for alternate modes of transportation rather than a freeway project

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0226 Noah Jenkins

**Comment:** The people of Portland--and users of the I-5 corridor--need a congestion solution that benefits the local community and addresses the real and increasing effects of climate change. The proposed I-5 expansion in the Rose Quarter is not that solution.

In fact, this proposal meets NONE of the criteria in that sentence, because it isn't even a congestion solution. No major metropolitan area has ever solved congestion problems with a freeway expansion; this is no exception. Even the consulting firm hired by ODOT to explore this project concluded, "Baseline, significant congestion will exist in 2027 on the I-5 and I-205 study corridors, even with all the improvements proposed. Why spend half a billion dollars to stand still? Induced demand will simply mean the same gridlock, but with more vehicles. That, in turn, will mean more pollution for the neighborhood (including Harriet Tubman Middle School, whose students are already suffering from poor air quality), and an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide. This is failure upon failure, topped with failure: harm (rather than benefit) to the local community; contribution to (rather than prevention of) climate change; and as much, if not more, traffic congestion.

The \$500 million proposed for this project could be far better spent on expanded public and active transport options, such as increased bus/light rail service and sidewalks in areas of the city that need them; these would help more people to get out of their cars, reducing freeway traffic and helping to build a more vibrant Rose Quarter community. Decongestion pricing should be explored as a means of further reducing congestion, here and elsewhere in the city; proceeds from such a system could be earmarked for further improvements to transit alternatives, to ensure that all Portlanders--with or without their own cars--can readily get to the places where they work, shop, and live. These are the kinds of investments we need to be making; the proposed I-5 expansion is a waste of those opportunities. I hope that ODOT will pursue the smarter, healthier, better path by abandoning this proposal.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0327 Noah Porter

**Comment:** As a lifelong citizen of Portland, I've always taken pride in our city's progressive and courageous commitment to a better future. Our history of investment in bike infrastructure, public transportation and environmental policy speak to our greatest strength as a community -- our willingness to do what's right even when it deviates from what's easy, popular or comfortable. The issue of freeway expansion is another test for our commitments to our environment and our future, we should be doubling down on alternatives to car commuting rather than hurdling further down the path of climate catastrophe rather that we've been on since America chose the highway as its de facto method of transportation. Our greatest victories



as Portlanders have come when we rebuke the conventional in favor of truer wisdom, when we transform highways into public green space. I urge our leadership to take seriously the many studies that illuminate highway expansion projects' failure to reduce traffic and to give credence to the legitimate climate concerns re: further investment into fossil fuel dependent infrastructure. There are better uses for this money and more creative solutions to this problem of travel times, and I implore our city's leadership to rise to the occasion and do the brave thing.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0402 Noel Nevins

**Comment:** I feel that this freeway expansion would be spending far too much money on an environmentally regressive project.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0302 Nona Gamel

**Comment:** I am 73 years old. I am grateful every day that I don't have grandchildren who will have to suffer through the effects of climate change. I don't think we can imagine how catastrophic this will be. In fact, I am sure we don't or we would not be looking at a freeway expansion. I lived in California for years and saw how useless these expansions are. If you build more freeways, more people will drive on them. This freeway expansion will inevitably increase air pollution and traffic congestion.

It will damage a community that has too often been the victim of other people's ambitions. Harriet Tubman middle school students today should not have recess outside due to air pollution. Does anyone honestly believe that this expansion will improve things at their school?

The expansion also increases problems for bike riders, the very people who are literally risking their lives every day to improve our air quality.

Please think of our future and invest this significant amount of money in something that actually will improve our air--more buses, more rapid transit, or more bike lanes. It's time for someone to take the first step and deal with the reality of our current world. 1960's solutions won't work any better now than they did then.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0402 Nora Lehmann

*General Public*

**Comment:** I am a resident of NE Portland. My children are still in pre-school but are zoned for Boise-Eliot Elementary and Harriet Tubman Middle School, and so will be affected by this issue personally.



I strongly oppose the proposed I5 expansion for many, many, many reasons, but first and foremost because it is madness, complete insanity, to spend half a billion dollars widening a freeway when we have 11 years to massively cut back our greenhouse gas emissions to avert the worst effects of climate change. We should not and, indeed, must not be investing in fossil fuel infrastructure at this critical juncture in human history.

And, if we have half a billion dollars to be spent on transportation infrastructure, it should be spent on improving public transportation, protected bike lanes, and walkable communities, not adding lanes to freeways. I regularly bike my two young children to their preschool, and even though our route is on so-called bike streets, I can tell you that I am always anxious for their safety. There is so much room for improvement for bike infrastructure, and the safer biking gets, the more people will turn to it as an alternative to cars. It is truly a virtuous cycle (ha, pun intended).

Climate change is an existential threat, and as a parent, it is my deepest fear for my children's lives. I urge, beg, implore you to turn away from this ill-considered project, and instead invest the money in more truly visionary transportation projects, projects that would actually improve our future, not continue to degrade and destroy it.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0401 Nora Mattek

*General Public*

**Comment:** I am concerned about the following issues:

- Expanding freeways is not an effective strategy for reducing congestion. ODOT has failed to make the case for why this project should move forward.
- ODOT should fully evaluate proven strategies such as congestion pricing and investment in public transportation before spending a half billion dollars to expand a short stretch of highway.
- The project is entirely at odds with the City's Climate Agenda. 40% of Oregon's emissions are from the transportation sector. We need to focus on strategies that reduce dependency on cars, not perpetuate 1950s style highway projects.
- At the same time that ODOT is proposing to spend nearly half a billion dollars on expanding I-5, the region continues to neglect serious road safety problems in East Portland.
- The project will increase air pollution in the backyard of Harriet Tubman Middle School, which already has some of the worse air quality in the state.

For a project with an estimated cost of over \$500 million, we feel the projected community benefits are just not there - while the opportunity cost of using these funds shelves other deserving projects with tangible safety improvements or opportunities to decarbonize our transportation system.



**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0401 Nora Polk

**Comment:** I am concerned about the following issues:

Expanding freeways is not an effective strategy for reducing congestion. ODOT has failed to make the case for why this project should move forward.

ODOT should fully evaluate proven strategies such as congestion pricing and investment in public transportation before spending a half billion dollars to expand a short stretch of highway.

The project is entirely at odds with the City's Climate Agenda. 40% of Oregon's emissions are from the transportation sector. We need to focus on strategies that reduce dependency on cars, not perpetuate 1950s style highway projects.

At the same time that ODOT is proposing to spend nearly half a billion dollars on expanding I-5, the region continues to neglect serious road safety problems in East Portland.

The project will increase air pollution in the backyard of Harriet Tubman Middle School, which already has some of the worse air quality in the state.

For a project with an estimated cost of over \$500 million, we feel the projected community benefits are just not there - while the opportunity cost of using these funds shelves other deserving projects with tangible safety improvements or opportunities to decarbonize our transportation system.

Sincerely,

Nora Polk

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0328 Nora Stern

**Comment:** I am writing in opposition to the I 5 expansion project. In this critical time of climate change we must make essential choices for our planet. We need better public transit to ease tragic congestion, rather than a project that makes it easier to drive more. 40% of Oregon's carbon comes from transportation! A shift in thinking about these plans could change that. Streams of cars all going in one direction is a ridiculous use of fossil fuel and carbon output. Cities like London have limited their car traffic and improved the quality of air and quality of life. In contrast, I am just now coming back from Medellin, Colombia, where car emissions are so bad your eyes hurt and I coughed the whole time. Portland is prized for its clean air, a quality that we are rapidly losing. I can smell exhaust fumes when I walk out my door. School children are right next to this proposed project site, and this would impact the entire downtown. We must have a full environmental assessment. Priority should be given to solutions that maximize multi-person occupancy.



**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0326 Odessa Cole

**Comment:** I do not support the i5 freeway expansion. I have many concerns about how 500 million dollars is going to be spent, but the top reasons include:

- environmental concerns. first, we want a full environmental impact statement so we can understand this better. more freeways does not address the fact that we need to change the way we use transportation and how we move across this city. the money should be put into public transportation.

- we have a lot of unsafe streets but i5 is not actually the one that causes the most deaths, put that money towards Powell or 82nd.

- there are not examples of freeway expansions that have ever solved congestion in the long term- there simply is not reason to think this will be a different in Portland

Freeway expansion is not going to make Portland better but 500 million dollars could do a lot of things to make Portland better. Please consider another means for this money

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0224 Odont Are Jackasses

**Comment:** You all are out of your <<<.....>>>> minds. <<<<.....>>>> idiots

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0325 Ovid Boyd

**Comment:** This project is a planning fail and demonstration of how smart expertise is misdirected in a way that harms our state.

If you had \$500 million, and you asked experts how to improve congestion in Portland, would they tell you to add freeway lanes in the city center?

No, they would not. Freeway expansions don't reduce congestion (due to induce demand). They tend to shift congestion around, and make it overall worse by encouraging more people to drive.

If you had \$500 million dollars, and you asked experts how to improve the safety of our transportation system, would they tell you to add freeway lanes in the city center?

This is one of the safest roads in the state. Two people have been killed here, but both cases were folks walking onto the highway (which this project does nothing to address). Instead, we are widening the road, which will get more people driving. The more drivers we have in our city, the more crashes we will have, and the more dead people. Even worse, if the project is



successful it will lead to higher speeds over the expanded stretch. No car drivers have been killed here because it is often slow (and safe). Increasing speeds so that car drivers may now have high speed impacts is the opposite of a safety project.

If you had \$500 million dollars, and you asked experts how to improve the environment, would they tell you to add freeway lanes in the city center?

Getting more people into cars, and encouraging car dependent sprawling land use in Clark County, is not a benefit to the environment.

If you had \$500 million dollars, and you asked experts how to foster active transportation in Portland, would they tell you to add freeway lanes in the city center?

ODOT has suggested that removing a bike friendly bridge, and adding in another one that curves around steeply, and then widening the street overpasses a bit is a good active transportation investment. This money would absolutely transform walking and cycling citywide, and instead is going to give us a situation which is both a little worse and a little better in one little spot.

So, why do we have this project? Because we misused expertise. We did not tell ODOT, "here are our goals, we want less congestion, a safer transportation system, a more environmentally friendly system, and one that encourages active transportation, how do we meet them?"

Instead, highway engineers at ODOT, being experts trained to think of traffic as smooth car flows around a city, looked at this spot and imagined cars flowing more rapidly. It's a vision that is beautiful if you are a highway engineer, but pretty traffic is not a goal people would have chosen. Moreover, being highway engineers and not financial analysts, this vision of beautiful flowing highway expansion didn't have a connection to a price tag. So, we got a \$500 million dollar project that doesn't meet any conceivable transportation goal.

When they brought to the community and said: "wouldn't it be nice?" The answer should have been: "umm, no, we have goals, and this completely fails to meet them and is hugely expensive to boot". Instead, our answer has been, "well, you are expert highway engineers, so I guess you know what you're doing?" Yes, this project is perfect if you want a pretty highway, it's completely crap if you have any other goal you might think of for a transportation project.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0312 Owen Ronchelli

*Go Lloyd*

**Comment:** Good afternoon. My name is Owen Ronchelli. I'm executive director of Go Lloyd. The Lloyd is a transportation management association in the Lloyd neighborhood. We've been around since 1994 and we have over 160-member businesses representing 15,000 employees and residents. We pride ourselves in the results of transitioning the employees and residents out of their single-occupant vehicles and on to alternative modes. We actively promote and



manage programs that shift people's behavior away from single-occupant trips into alternative modes. And, you know, we live and breathe transportation demand management every single day. The main reason Go Lloyd supports this project is because of all the street level transportation improvements. Half of the project's budget is going towards these elements and we're excited about the project. As not only will it fix long deficient and unsafe bike and pedestrian facilities, but it will create new ones that don't exist today. The bike ped bridge at Northeast Clackamas and the new crossing at Northeast Hancock down to lower Albina. Everyone going through this area, no matter what mode they use today, bikes, cars, buses, streetcar, or on foot, can acknowledge it's lousy and a potentially dangerous experience. The build alternative detailed in the EA intends to address this, making travel through this area safer and more intuitive for all users. These are exactly the types of improvements we desperately need if we hope to encourage more active transportation use for both timid and reluctant users. As well as attracting new users that are arriving in Portland every day. The improvements included in the build alternative of this project are thoughtfully designed and community vetted. The price tag is significant but appropriate to adequately address the transportation system needs of the area. Please don't buy into the fallacy that is circulated by critics that this is a freeway widening project primarily benefiting high-income users outside the city. On the contrary, it's an investment in our multi-modal transportation system that will transform access for all users in an area that has needed it for a long, long time.

**Attachments:** N/A

## 2019 0303 Owen Wozniak

**Comment:** I wish to express my concern about this project.

Specifically, it appears from the summary EA conclusions on your project website that improvements to traffic flow will be minimal in comparison to the cost. The safety benefits appear to be focused on a reduction of fender benders that snarl traffic and harm economic activity but rarely seriously endanger motorists. It's very hard to see how the marginal benefits justify the price tag.

What most troubles me, though, is the notion in the EA that the project will have mildly beneficial climate change impacts. This is astounding. I'm certainly open to be proven wrong, but it seems obvious that to whatever extent I-5 flows more freely as a result of this project, it will attract more traffic and further facilitate a fundamentally unsustainable transportation mode, the single passenger vehicle. This is an expensive, long term investment a transportation system that is ruining our climate. It's simply irresponsible to look at the project's climate impact in isolation from the larger truth about vehicle related emissions.

I appreciate that the politics and financing of this project are complex, and that one can't simply say "spend that \$500 million on making surface streets safer for pedestrians!" But the simple truth is that spending this \$500 million to improve pedestrian safety would have a far greater human health benefit. And using it to make system-wide bike, pedestrian and transit system improvement would do a lot more to address long-term congestion and greenhouse gas emissions concerns. Even doing nothing seems preferable, as it would allow time to actually

Environmental Assessment Comments

First Name Begins with N or O



implement congestion pricing on I-5 and address congestion in a much more cost effective manner.

Most importantly, the fact that many local community groups oppose the project also greatly concerns me. The agencies involved in developing this project have clearly worked hard to reach out to affected communities. Given the history of this neighborhood in particular, it's paramount that local views be taken very seriously into account.

On balance, there seems to be a lot of weak reasons to support this project, and a lot of strong reasons to oppose it. I hope you will reconsider the whole thing.

**Attachments:** N/A