



January 17, 2018

To: Mr. Ted Wheeler, Mayor
Ms. Chloe Eudaly, City Commissioner
Mr. Nick Fish, City Commissioner
Ms. Amanda Fritz, City Commissioner
Mr. Dan Saltzman, City Commissioner
Cc: ODOT Staff, PBOT Staff

Re: I-5 Widening in the Eliot Neighborhood and adjacent areas

Mr Mayor, City Commissioners-

The I-5 Broadway/Weidler widening project is not an improvement. It will do many harmful things to the residents of Eliot, the taxpayers of Portland and Oregon and the environment. A partial list follows:

- **Tubman School access:** Removal of N Flint Avenue will have negative effects for accessing Tubman school and Lillis Albina park by parents and children in cars, on bikes and on foot. Eliminating and forcing that traffic onto Vancouver, Williams and Broadway will increase risks of injury accidents or worse.
- **Bicycle Connectivity:** N Flint is also widely used by bike commuters from north of Eliot as a safer route to the current Williams-right hook across a freeway ramp to Broadway route, which has one of the highest rates of auto/bike accidents. The replacement will be worse than the existing alignment because it will be more out-of-direction and steeper grades. Widening a mile of other roads to create wider bicycle lanes could be done in absence of this project, this project will not be good for bikes and is competing for money that could be spent on bicycle infrastructure
- **Reconnecting the Neighborhood:** The gulch that I-5 is currently in was a stream in the early 20th Century and before. It has ALWAYS been a natural barrier between Upper and Lower Albina (hence those historic names). There is no justification to "reconnect" the neighborhood through a new Hancock overpass. A new Hancock overpass will simply become a Broadway Bypass if built. That will NOT be an amenity for Eliot.
- **Unwanted token benefits:** The "lid" offered to Eliot as a concession has already been much reduced in both size and utility over what was initially offered. In fact, it will be little more than a wide sidewalk over an even busier freeway and provide no value to the community. The triangular spaces of land that the project proposes to create will have NO PUBLIC VALUE and based on how ODOT's marginal land is currently used will become additional spaces for trash, camping and other undesirable activities
- **Construction Impacts:** The reconstruction of the overpasses to accommodate the additional lanes will be disruptive to the immediate businesses (Portland Public Schools Blanchard Site, the Rose Quarter, Emanuel Hospital, cancer center, etc.) and Eliot residents.
- **Development Stagnation:** This project will postpone, for at least a decade, redevelopment along Broadway between the river and NE MLK Blvd anticipated in the Central City Plan. What is needed is not only to delay this project, but to put a stake in it for good to send a strong signal to the development community that this area is prime for development.
- **Air Pollution:** I-5 is a major source of air pollution in our neighborhood and widening I-5 will cause a huge spike in particulate emissions during construction and the addition of more cars and trucks will not move things in the right direction. Portland Public Schools is considering building a wall to reduce this pollution's effect on their Tubman Middle School campus which apparently will be taken down with ODOT's project.
- **Lack of Congestion Benefit:** Study after study has shown that freeway widening will not solve congestion. Essentially this project will just put more cars into the new lanes immediately, wiping out any travel time benefits of this project
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Spending \$450 Million or more of borrowed money will further advantage driving over other modes of transportation while simultaneously not keeping up with latent demand. This project will take away from funding that could be used to further public transit or other active transportation modes.



- **Lack of Safety Improvement:** The proposal makes minimal to no changes to the weave lengths of the on- and off-ramps, widens the freeway which will increase the possibility of side-crashes and doesn't improve any safety metric significantly other than adding shoulders to clear crashes faster. Additionally, this project would score very low on a vision-zero metric. Why are we building this project?
- **Ensuring our Highway-centric future:** This project will for generations to come solidify the presence of a wide freeway through inner east portland, ensuring that the Willamette river will be separated from the people who live on the east side by a major barrier.

Please kill this freeway widening project in our neighborhood, once and for all, by removing it from the Transportation System Plan and all future plans.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allan Rudwick".

Allan Rudwick
Land Use Chair, Eliot Neighborhood Association
228 NE Morris St
Portland, OR 97212