

VIA U.S. MAIL and E-MAIL to
info@i5RoseQuarter.org



ODOT
Attn: Megan Channel
123 N.W. Flanders St.
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March 12, 2019

Re: Public Comment on Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion

Direct 503.445.2102
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Dear Ms. Channel:

As a second generation Oregonian, Portland business owner, and person who cares about our future, I urge ODOT to proceed promptly with tolling and **not** to expand I-5 through the Rose Quarter. Here's why:

There is no **safety** basis for this project. There is no history of serious crashes on I-5 in the Rose Quarter. ODOT has not tried basic safety measures to reduce the minor crashes that have occurred, such as advisory speeds or video radar to reduce top end speeding. Our safety dollars are **better spent elsewhere** on ODOT's network, such as SE 82nd Avenue, SE Powell Boulevard and the other high crash corridors that ODOT operates within Portland.

As for **reliability**, fender benders will slow the freeway even if ODOT adds more lanes. Unreliability due to minor crashes is inherent to freeways, and a reason we need **other ways** to bring workers to central Portland, such as light rail and bus transit, and pedestrian and bicycle corridors that are safe and comfortable for everyone. **Advisory speeds and automated enforcement** are proven to eliminate the top end speeding and the speed differentials that contribute to fender benders. We simply can't jump to spending this kind of money for a marginal improvement in freeway reliability.

Some people who support this project think it is for **capacity**. ODOT acknowledges that capacity **won't significantly add** capacity. And if it does, that's not good. We know that adding capacity will induce demand, and nobody will get there faster. Adding capacity for private vehicles to come onto Portland's surface streets is not the future we want.

ODOT has a lot of pictures of lids and trees to make this project **look nice**. Nobody is going to use the **small, noisy, smelly lids** for anything. They're a waste of space and money.

There is no reason to tie **surface street improvements** to the freeway expansion. If ODOT says we can't have surface street improvements unless we agree to the freeway expansion that we don't want, that's a **false choice** and ODOT should be ashamed.

Megan Channel
March 12, 2019
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Some people have said this is a “**bottleneck**” where the freeway “slams down to two lanes” each way. In fact, north-south freeway capacity balloons through Portland because I-5 operates **together with I-205 and I-405** for a total of seven through lanes each direction for through and commercial traffic plus auxiliary lanes. How many is enough?

This project would tear up I-5, causing **years of delays**. By the time that’s done, **changes** in vehicle technology, private vehicle use and ownership, and commuting habits will have changed. Anyone who pretends to know what the “demand” for freeway travel in 10 or 20 years will be is kidding themselves, or us. The people who pretend to know are the ones who make income from expanding freeways.

I run a law firm, which is an employer **small business in Portland** downtown. We generate revenue and attract lawyers who are specialists who serve the entire state. This national talent doesn’t come to Portland because we have big freeways. Portland’s competitive advantage is clean air, forests, beaches and snow. ODOT’s agenda to keep expanding freeways is a **threat to our communities and natural environment that make Portland a valued place**.

ODOT calls this an “improvement” project and promotes it with a web site that has a .org designation (i5RoseQuarter.org), suggesting it is somehow a non-profit. The web site features pictures of pedestrians and bicycles. This is greenwashing, and it confirms for many that ODOT is manipulating the process to promote a pre-determined agenda that is rooted in a 20th century freeway-building mindset. We know better than that.

Please hear us loud and clear. **No more freeways.**

Very truly yours,



Scott F. Kocher
Portland