

April 1, 2019

Oregon Department of Transportation
Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler
City Commissioner Nick Fish
City Commissioner Amanda Fritz
City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly
City Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty

I am writing to you on behalf of the Irvington Community Association (ICA) in regard to the Oregon Department of Transportation's proposed I-5 widening project through the Rose Quarter. The ICA passed a resolution at its March 14th meeting affirming its opposition to the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) proposed highway expansion plan.

The ICA opposes spending \$500 million on expanding I-5 through the Rose Quarter through the addition of lanes and the altering of the on-ramps.

Contrary to ODOT's unsupported claims, the proposed alteration of I-5 will increase greenhouse emissions at a time when every level of government should be taking steps to curb such emissions. It is also problematic that ODOT based certain claims on an I-5 bridge expansion which has not been approved and thus does not exist and may never exist.

The project will further erode the condition of the Broadway-Weidler corridor at a time when the city should be looking at making the corridor a more neighborhood and business-friendly corridor.

The project will increase dangerous interactions between vehicles and cyclists/pedestrians as a result of the wide on-ramps which will encourage increasing vehicle speeds and will result in intersections which are too wide for pedestrians to safely cross.

The project will reduce the likelihood of improving the Rose Quarter by adding housing and other businesses.

The project will not reconnect the neighborhoods with the Rose Quarter as the proposed lids will be too small and will not be built in such a way as to allow for structures which could actually help in reconnecting the Rose Quarter to its neighbors. The plan to have the lids be "parks" is contradicted by the fact that there is no proposed entity to engage in upkeep. Even if there were upkeep, it is unlikely that people would want to hang out in an area surrounded by heavy traffic directly over a highway spewing noxious fumes.

Instead of spending money on a project that will increase global warming and result in a deterioration of the pedestrian environment, ODOT should first toll I-5 for a sufficient period to gather data about the reduction of congestion which results from tolling, as has been shown, repeatedly, in other projects throughout the United States and other countries. Instead of encouraging highway expansions, the city should request that ODOT instead spend the \$500 million on other constitutionally allowed projects involving bike and pedestrian infrastructure and modifications to the roadway that make roads safer for all road users.

ODOT should be spending money on traffic calming, safety improvements and pedestrian infrastructure, targeting the arterial streets that have been shown to cause the most serious injuries and fatalities.

Instead of supporting a highway expansion through the Rose Quarter, the city should be encouraging the use of modes of transportation other than driving through the Broadway/Weidler corridor by spending on improving mass transit through the corridor and electrifying the bus fleet. The city should be adding bike and pedestrian infrastructure which will not only reduce emissions but will increase livability in the central city and create a more thriving business environment along a corridor which has languished for decades.

Finally, ODOT could utilize that money to offset the damage it has already done to N/NE Portland by paying to help build housing to replace the over 300 units of housing it demolished and never replaced when it originally built I-5. In addition, ODOT should reimburse Portland Public Schools for the \$12 million plus that PPS had to spend to make the air inside Tubman School clean enough to breathe.

Respectfully,

Bob Dobrich

President, Irvington Community Association

Steven Cole

Vice-president, Irvington Community Association