



**NORTHEAST COALITION
OF NEIGHBORHOODS**

March 29, 2019

Oregon Department of Transportation
info@i5RoseQuarter.org
Attention Megan Channell
123 NW Flanders St.
Portland, OR 97209

CC: Senator Lew Frederick; Senator Michael Dembrow
Representative Tawna D. Sanchez; Representative Barbara Smith Warner
Multnomah County Board of Commissioners; Portland City Council

Re: NECN opposition to I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project

Dear Ms Channell,

The Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods is opposed to the proposed I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, as it will have significant negative environmental effects, specifically on nearby populations, without creating a long-term solution at immense cost to the public. While we cannot support this project in its current form, as an organization that represents more than 60,000 neighbors in inner Northeast Portland, we are highly invested in the outcome of any major development proposals in our district and request to be engaged as stakeholders in any future proposals developed by ODOT.

According to the EPA, the majority of our NE district ranks among the 80- 90 percentile for diesel particulate and air pollution levels in air in the nation. Many of our neighborhoods either border or are in close proximity to the proposed freeway expansion project. Subsequently, residents in our neighborhoods will be *highly impacted* by the proposed project and increase in air pollution. Two of our schools Tubman and Boise-Eliot border on the Interstate 5 freeway and Portland State University scientists advise that children at these schools to avoid outdoor recess due air quality concerns. With already poor air and vulnerable populations near the proposed project we can little afford to increase harmful auto and truck pollution from increased traffic.

We oppose this project on the grounds that it will produce:

Significant environmental impacts

- The expansion would worsen air quality and noise, especially for vulnerable populations including children at Harriet Tubman and Boise-Elliot schools
- Analysis based on similar projects show increased driving will worsen greenhouse gas and diesel emissions

No improvement in congestion and safety over the long-term

- We are concerned that traffic congestion will increase due to latent demand, so the project will not resolve the regional bottleneck.
- After ODOT widened I-5 north of Lombard crashes increased, so we do not believe widening I-5 in the Rose Quarter will increase safety

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Alameda • Boise • Concordia • Eliot • Humboldt • Irvington • King • Lloyd • Sabin • Sullivan's Gulch • Vernon • Woodlawn
At King Neighborhood Facility, 4815 NE 7th Avenue, Portland, OR 97211. 503-823-4575 main, 503-823-3150 fax, info@necoalition.org

Cost to the taxpayers and greater areas of need

- \$500,000,000 of Oregon taxpayer funds would be better invested in infrastructure elsewhere in project that supports the region's greenhouse gas emissions reduction and equity goals
- Commissioner Joanne Hardesty opposes the project and has recommended that the funds be spent on walking and biking projects that increase equity in our region

In sum, as proposed this project will increase the burden on residents of Portland of poor air quality, noise, and increased traffic at an enormous expense to Oregon taxpayers without creating a lasting solution to relieve traffic congestion. We request that ODOT reinvest these funds in state owned roads that have been identified by Portland as High Crash Corridors, which include Lombard and MLK in our NE district. These investments would have significant safety and equity benefits for our neighbors.

We urge ODOT to reconsider or revise this plan and request to be included as stakeholders in the planning process going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mariah Dula". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mariah Dula
President of the Board
Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods