



Date: 20 June 2022

To: Portland City Council

From: No More Freeways
Allan Rudwick, Eliot Neighborhood Association
Mary Peveto, Neighbors for Clean Air

Subject: **Proposed Rose Quarter Freeway Expansion Intergovernmental Agreement with ODOT**

We write with respect to the IGA that is on your June 22nd agenda.

We fully support the City of Portland taking on the responsibility for land use planning for covers over the freeway in the Albina/Rose Quarter area. We are excited by and fully support the concepts Albina Vision has developed for the larger neighborhood including the capped area.

We are disappointed however that the City is not using its leverage in returning to the table for this project to ensure accountability for the climate and environmental impacts of highway expansion.

We remind you of your Climate Emergency Declaration, adopted just two years ago this month and this particular article:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that since freeway expansions disproportionately harm communities of color and increase carbon emissions, the City of Portland will require demand management, implemented equitably and in close collaboration with BIPOC communities, before any future freeway construction or expansion project¹;

Although ODOT has nominally expressed intent to toll the project area as part of the Regional Mobility Pricing Project, it is clearly dragging its feet, and is more interested in widening the freeway than using pricing to manage demand and reduce traffic and pollution. It's worth noting that ODOT's own consultant studies of road pricing indicated that pricing I-5 would be just as effective in reducing traffic as widening the freeway and could save hundreds of millions of

¹ This language lifted from the Climate Emergency Declaration, available here: <https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2021/climate-emergency-declaration-resolution-37494-june-30-2020.pdf#page=8>



dollars.² The clear opportunity in alignment with the emergency declaration is to analyze a pricing-only alternative to lane expansion to manage the congestion in the area. Yet ODOT has steadfastly refused to include any form of congestion pricing in the Environmental Analysis of the Rose Quarter project, claiming it is not “reasonably foreseeable.” ODOT’s position on the timing of road pricing is plainly at odds with adopted city policy.

We urge you to withdraw the IGA from today’s agenda and renegotiate it to include a commitment to a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) including analysis of a pricing-only alternative. Anything less is willful neglect of your self-declared climate obligations and your duty to the community to ensure accountability for all the impacts of freeway expansion.

² Chris Swenson, WSP, Testimony to the Portland Value Pricing Policy Advisory Committee, February 28, 2018. <https://youtu.be/OAfpzxy4W6A?t=4244>