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Portland, OR 97232-2736

Memo

Date: June 27, 2025
To: TPAC, JPACT, Metro Council, and Interested Parties
From: Ken Lobeck, Funding Programs Lead
Jean Senechal Biggs, Resource Development Manager
Subject: **Public Comment Period Summary**
I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) MTIP Formal Amendment

The June 2025 Formal Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) Formal/Full Amendment contains three projects. The purpose of this amendment is to amend/add three I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement Program projects to the 2024-27 MTIP to meet federal project delivery requirements. The I-5 IBR Program MTIP amendment contains funding updates and added phases to the non-construction phases project in Key 21570, plus adds two new segment or “package” construction phase projects. The funding net change through this amendment will increase the total programmed funding from a current \$103,112,407 to \$2,057,861,000.

Public Comment Period Notice and Invitation to Participate

Between May 12, 2025 and June 13, 2025, residents of the Portland metropolitan area were invited to provide comment on the proposed MTIP formal amendment. The notice and invitation to participate was distributed via the Metro News notification service and posted on the Metro website: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/news/public-notice-opportunity-comment-pending-amendment-metropolitan-transportation-improvement-84>

Comments were accepted via email to summer.blackhorse@oregonmetro.gov.

During this comment period, Metro received:

- two email comments
- Testimony from one person at the Metro Council meeting on May 15, 2025
- Testimony from one person at the TPAC meeting on June 6, 2025

No mailed letters or voicemail comments were received.

Table 1 includes a summary of the comments received. Copies of the emails and transcripts of the testimony are attached.

Table 1: Summary of Comments Received between May 12, 2025 and June 13, 2025

| Comments Received | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|--|---|
| Num | Date | Name | Comment Type | Brief Summary of Comments |
| 1 | 5-15-2025 | Arthur Lewellan | Public Testimony at the May 15, 2025 Metro Council meeting | Concerns raised about poor engineering for Rose Quarter and I-5 IBR projects |
| 2 | 5-19-2025 | Robin Smith | email | Concerns about increasing project costs and funding availability, as well as access on and off Hayden Island. |
| 3 | 5-22-2025 | Cory Pinkard | email | Concerns about the decline of rail infrastructure and neighborhood livability and increases in vehicle congestion and social inequities. |
| 4 | 6-6-2025 | Chris Smith | Public Testimony at the June 6, 2025 TPAC meeting | Support for seismic replacement, transit and active transportation investments across the Columbia River, and an equitable toll program. Concerns about the width of the bridge and freeway expansion, increasing project costs and accountability, and lack of connectivity between active transportation elements to transit stations and into downtown Vancouver. Interest in communicating the importance of equity and implementing a low-income toll discount through the MTIP amendment. |

Attachments:

1. Arthur Lewellan Metro Council testimony transcript 05-15-2025
2. Robin Smith email 05-19-2025
3. Cory Pinckard email 05-22-2025
4. Chris Smith TPAC testimony transcript 06-06-2025

Lewellan - IBR testimony transcription, Metro Council, May 15, 2025:

My name is Arthur Lewellan. I've been an advocate for transportation system planning in Portland for more years than everyone sitting behind me have been alive. That's how long I put an effort into steering projects to... productive outcomes. And I am not here today as a friendly witness to the current council. I consider in transportation system go. You are all utterly incompetent. Disgracefully incompetent. And the three projects that I listed over my years of study are the Columbia River crossing project the southwest corner max extension to tiger. Thank god voters voted it down. And this latest plan for the rose quarter. Astonishingly bad engineering. I made a few appearances over the last months to try to make my case what can be salvaged on the gross quarter project? And they are the new entrance southbound from Weidler. As far as I can tell, it's no longer on the table, but that would reduce surface traffic demonstrably, make safer. And I say the exit southbound on from southbound Broadway, you're moving into wheeler way, just south of that that's, that's a hazard in the making. We're in pileups collisions, injuries, fatalities. It has to remain where it is. And the exit that's now proposed, I don't know if it's possible, but it's owed us a design for exiting to go eastbound on Weidler. I'm on to it, serious perspective, transit system planning that may, I think, become a white paper study. I don't need your opinion why I say electric buses don't convert to standard buses don't convert to electric very well, no they don't. Nor do yale school buses, they don't. Nor do the paratransit lift vans. Oh, boy, just so great with converting all of these obsolete chassis to electric and calling it good. So, one more three-minute exercise in the testimony, probably necessary, to make my points.

From: SmithR
To: Metro
Subject: [External sender]Adequate funding?
Date: Monday, May 19, 2025 8:25:33 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from an External source. Do not open links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Since the changes you are proposing cost more money.... Is there adequate funding for these and for the overall bridge project. Especially given the federal government situation.
Also short of building a toyboata infibious vehicle for myself how am I going to get on and off island? The current plan appears to screw Hayden island.
Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 8:43 PM

To: Trans System Accounts <transportation@oregonmetro.gov>

Subject: [External sender] Cities Designed for People and Society Instead of Cars and Profiteering

Hello,

Oregon owes a lot of its strengths to rail infrastructure, much of which unfortunately no longer even exists. The further we move away from the logical layout provided by streetcar grids and electric commuter interurban railroads the uglier and less livable the city and its suburbs become. An intelligent coastal city would take advantage of this limited time of people crowding in to install city assets that will benefit us for generations such as a rail route beneath the Willamette meaning the Steel Bridge won't break the light rail circuit interrupting all MAX lines every time it lifts, and railway going between Vancouver and us. I-5 should be buried on the inner east side stretch to make the area tolerable and reclaim space for the Black community to rebuild their community they had stolen from them. The WES should expand to extend down to Salem reuniting the Portland metropolitan area with our capital. It makes perfect sense to build the full Southwest Corridor (Purple) Line with railway stations on Marquam Hill and at Portland Community College Sylvania Campus, for example, and zero sense not to.

Electric cars also destroy the environment through resource mining, manufacturing processes and ultimately going to the landfill in mass droves. The pollution they cause is simply unnecessary as is the amount of urban space squandered on parking and other paved over autocentric wastes. MORE VEHICLES ON THE ROAD MEANS MORE AVOIDABLE DEATHS WILL CONTINUE TO CONSTANTLY OCCUR! They also perpetuate redlining, urban sprawl, the food deserts that come from that invariably, along with cities that are not navigable as a pedestrian or bicyclist and are, in fact, inhospitable to humanity along with being lethally horrendous towards animals.

They add to traffic congestion.

Commodification of societal needs and attempted normalization of trying to substitute rampant consumerism where we need standardized, regulated and uniform public utilities doesn't work.

Putting the financial burden of transportation inefficiently and directly on the individual citizen is simply not wise or fair and hasn't been the norm for even 80 years. We need to invest in commuter rail that's properly implemented as it typically is overseas. A commuter rail system is an engineering marvel while buses are just buses. The most reliable predictor of a neighborhood being impoverished is if it has no commuter rail connection. The American people are apathetic through decades of disenfranchisement and a lot of that marginalization (eg Robert Moses's racist urban renewal) is through divestment of public infrastructure, utilities and programs to help the American people. We can't undo the social inequities inflicted upon and retained by redlining until we transcend the highway robbery carcentric built habitat that physically structurally reinforces them. We're past the point of car dominated transportation being anything better than a tragic hindrance or an outright travesty. Public works materially improving life for the taxpaying citizenry will bolster civic pride.

Transcontinental High Speed Rail should integrate seamlessly with commuter rail networks so it can evenly function as one cohesive system and this will convert flyover country (CONUS flights should be virtually eliminated) back into a thriving heartland by functioning as an artery of commute and commerce which will reduce clustering on the coasts. Similarly, wholly integrated circuits of commuter rail blended with interurban routes, light rail lines, street car grids, subways, and even trolleys along with electric ferries functioning together as a comprehensive, coherent series of interwoven systems would prevent people from having to live on top of each other in city centers in order to have quick access to urban cores and downtown areas so this would stimulate our local economies and prevent gentrification from demolishing cherished heirlooms of our historicity, destroying our classic neighborhoods, shredding the fabric of our communities and toppling our civic landmarks and architectural heirlooms along with other social capital such as venerable culture generating venues.

Numerous studies show that built environments of homogenously bleak and bland duplitecture dreck that profiteering developers push on us for their privatized gains to our public loss for the riches of themselves and corporate slumlords not only cause homelessness from being financially inaccessible to most Americans, but also cause depression from creating such a devastatingly sterile, cold, unloving urban habitat that's too congested and overcrowded to work properly as a correctly engineered built environment. Our roadways are overcrowded and no amount of widening them and adding lanes will do anything to help it because it just leads to induced demand that inevitably grinds to a halt at snags and bottlenecks down the road. Shouldn't American cities be thriving centers of culture and character rather than austere and chintzy morasses of mediocrity?

I believe that we can design the cities of our nation to reflect a future that embraces humanity and that we also must for America to have any sort of a bright future ahead of it. Right now we are mired in the destruction of our cities from the inward attacking neocolonial oppressors who weaponize their clout of wealth against the nation for their own off-shore un-American gains of privileged, parasitic, private profits. This greed fueled anti-social exploitation is present day feudalism driving us into another gilded age. Tons of new petrochemical building "luxury living" housing units remain empty serving only as financial assets in investment portfolios of hedge fund and permanent capital firm cretins sheltering dubiously acquired wealth instead of as direly needed shelter for humans. We deserve a landscape we can be proud of and country should come first before corporate looting and exploitation. Legacies are important and live on forever.

We've grievously regressed since the grand times of our interurban electric railways, our streetcar grid, our trolley lines. We're a port town without even ferry service/water taxis. We need to do different things with a different mindset if we want to change things for the better.

With space opened up in our cities we could rebuild beloved structures gone from economic and environmental disaster utilizing new technologies such as hempcrete and 3-D printing. We could create vertical agriculture, green pocket areas, etc. on spots currently now just serving as paved over squares and nothing more. We can extend democracy into offering the taxpayer residents democratic say in what their city consists of, how it looks and how it operates promoting civic engagement and participation. With vision and strength we can be heroes.

Thank you,

Cory Pinckard

Good morning, Chris Smith on behalf of the Just Crossing Alliance, commenting on the IBR MTIP Amendment that you have in front of you this morning. I know that you're not voting this month, and we'll have formal written testimony for next month when you do have the votes. But I wanted to take the opportunity to put some stuff on the record and plant some seeds for you to think about.

First of all, the staff memo puts Just Crossing Alliance JCA in the known opposition category. Our position's a little more nuanced than that. We support a number of elements of this project, including the seismic replacement, getting transit and active transportation across the river, and an equitable toll program. Our issues are more about the width of the facility and the extra four miles of freeway expansion that accompanied the bridge.

With respect to the MTIP Amendment, some things to think about. First of all, a process question. There's a lot of the talk in Salem right now in transportation package is about accountability and I think the way we're doing this on this project is not supporting good accountability. They're asking for authority to spend some of the money they've already got in hand, but they're a year overdue in giving us a new cost estimate.

If you say, go ahead and spend it and tell us what it costs later, that's the opposite of accountability. And I want to point out that you just did this with ODOT and Rose Quarter. You approved an MTIP amendment and six weeks later they came out with a new increased cost estimate. That's not the way to keep our agencies accountable, and I would suggest that you think about whether you should perhaps not do the MIP amendment until after we see the new cost estimate from IBR, with respect to some of the specifics in the amendment.

On the second of the three amendments around tolling, the description talks about tolling signage and electrical systems. That's a little bit misleading and I've talked to staff about this. I want to appreciate Jean for taking all of my questions very patiently and providing good answers. That amendment is really about tolling gantries, cameras, and transponders. So, this is the equipment that will implement the pre-completion tolling. It's not just putting up some signs. And again, we support an equitable tolling program for this project, but I want to underscore the equitable line.

The Oregon Transportation Commission passed a low income total discount program for Oregon in general, but also including this project. But because Washington is actually operating the tolling, they don't have such a policy and that needs to be reconciled. The toll scenarios currently in front of the transportation commission(s) talk about a low income discount as soon as practical to be equitable. We think that needs to be there on day one and adding something to the MTIP amendment that communicates the importance of equity and getting that discount in place might be useful.

And then finally, on the third amendment, which is funding bridge construction itself. Again, we don't oppose the...replacement. During the public comment period, we and other allies had lots of comments on the active transportation design. We think the active transportation design that was in the draft EIS was not functional and did not meet our goals. It had no connectivity to the transit

stations or their elevators, and it ended on the waterfront a hundred feet above the ground. We think it's important that the active transportation path be designed so that it has access to all the transit stations and their elevators, and that it continues into downtown Vancouver where it can land at grade somewhere, rather than having an elevated termination. So again, this might be a place to try and insert some of those values, and I hope you will think about that.

Thank you very much.