



TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Everett Wild, Policy Advisor
SUBJECT: Clackamas County Statement on I-205 Third Lane
DATE: January 30, 2024

REQUEST: Staff is requesting Board consideration of the attached statement supporting Phase 2 of the I-205 Improvements Project.

BACKGROUND: The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) began work on the I-205 Improvements Project at the direction of the Oregon State Legislature in House Bill 2017 (2017). ODOT is currently constructing Phase 1 of the project, which upgrades the Abernethy Bridge to withstand a major earthquake and widens it to accommodate a third travel lane. Phase 2 of the project would add a third lane between the Abernethy Bridge and Stafford Road (Exit 3) and make seismic improvements to nine other structures including the Tualatin River Bridges.

ODOT has been developing plans to implement a toll on I-205 to partially fund construction costs. In a letter dated May 4, 2023, Governor Tina Kotek announced to Legislative leadership that she directed ODOT to “delay all toll collection until January 1, 2026.”

Following the pause on toll collections, ODOT staff reevaluated timelines and available funding. ODOT ultimately concluded that they would be unable to complete the I-205 Improvements Project without toll revenue and proposed to “indefinitely postpone” Phase 2. The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) concurred with the staff recommendation to not move forward with Phase 2 at a special meeting on June 28, 2023.

In December 2023, the Board asked staff to prepare a document stating the County’s position reinforcing the importance of Phase 2 of the I-205 Improvements Project, particularly the benefits that would arise from eliminating the two-lane bottleneck. The statement could be used for legislative outreach and could help guide and supplement testimony provided by Commissioners and staff to the Legislature and OTC.

ATTACHMENTS: Draft Clackamas County Statement on I-205 Third Lane – January 30, 2024

I-205 Improvements Project PHASE 2: Safety – Resiliency – Climate – Economy

January 30, 2023



The Oregon Transportation Commission voted to **“indefinitely postpone”** building Phase 2 of the I-205 Project, **overruling** the State Legislature’s directive in HB 2017 and leaving a highway that is:



A regional bottleneck—causing significant **diversion**



Congested, causing **safety** concerns for 100,000+ daily trips



A major **freight and commuter** route—over 8% freight traffic

Clackamas County strongly supports Phase 2 of the I-205 Project and urges the State Legislature to **re-prioritize adding the missing third lane** between the Abernethy Bridge and Stafford Road (Exit 3)—which has already been identified as a project of national and statewide significance and will:



Improve safety:
reduce diversion onto neighborhood streets and decrease crashes



Enhance seismic resiliency: complete essential upgrades to prepare the full corridor



Relieve congestion:
provide more reliable travel times and reduce greenhouse emissions



Keep goods moving and business thriving:
prepare our region for projected growth

