


From: [Keith Watson](#)
To: [Draft EIS Feedback;](#) 
CC:
Subject: impact of increased volume on I-5 SB
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2008 10:16:57 PM
Attachments:

Hello,

I am a North Portland resident who works in SE. We bought our house in North for several reasons, mostly due to its proximity to the yellow Max Line that was soon to open along N Interstate at the time (the business in SE was not one of them – that came later). My wife and I share one car, and she either bikes to work or takes the Max. We love the city of Portland and the great parks and green spaces that are in such abundance here – that was what drew us to move here in the first place.

As I have made my daily commute S on I-5, I have watched traffic get heavier and heavier. The entrance I use at N Rosa Parks Way is almost always a point of some congestion, and it usually gets heavier and heavier as more traffic enters down through the 405 interchange and the road narrows down to 2 lanes just prior to the I-84 interchange, where I exit. Every day I hear on the traffic report that I-5 is stop and go or slow across the Interstate Bridge and through Delta Park starting very early and continuing through the morning. It is rarely mentioned that it is slow at the I-84 interchange, but it always is when I get there around 7:30. I have listened with interest to the news reports about the proposed expansion of the Bridge and I-5 through the Park. Lately it has become very alarming to me what will happen to my commute and my neighbors' commutes when the bottleneck at the bridge goes away and the gate opens for SE Washington residents to flood south into Portland for work every day.

Everyone has a choice to make about where to live. I think it is beyond dispute that more people commute into Portland from Washington than the other way around. I can't tell you how many people I talk to who say, "Portland property taxes are too high – I'm moving to (or that's why I live in) Vancouver. Washington doesn't tax you so much." So they make the move further away from their workplace, increasing their commute by however long it takes to wade through the traffic to cross into Portland. More and more cars sitting in traffic spewing out

exhaust fumes, people spending more time on the road getting stressed out, away from their families, all for the sake of lower property taxes. And they drive into Portland to do all their shopping because Oregon has no sales tax. I'm hardly one to talk about the environment as I have to commute diagonally across town, but it concerns me when I hear about the possibility of all the money that is likely to be spent so that people who have forsaken Portland for lower property taxes can get back to Portland that much quicker, likely causing gridlock for everyone closer in to the city. I realize that part of this project will be to expand light rail into Vancouver, but the people that I know that move to Vancouver are (and I know I'm generalizing here, but I call it like I see it) the type of people who value their SUV's and their driving independence more than the environment and who drive everywhere. For this reason, I expect the main result of freeway expansion to be simply much more car traffic moving much more quickly into the city center from further out, causing more of a mess that there already is.

After reading the Final Strategic Plan, it is unclear to me if the 2-lane section of I-5 near the Fremont bridge:

" 3.1.1 There are three remaining two-lane sections on I-5 in the study area: (1) I-84 – Fremont Bridge near the Rose Quarter, (2) Delta Park to Lombard, and (3) 99th Street to I-205 in Clark County."

includes the section just prior to the I-84 interchange (there are 2 separate sections between 405 and 84). On a daily basis, I see that traffic backs up from the 84 interchange, through the 405 interchange, and continues to back up further north, but all originating at the 84 interchange. The recommendations made:

R 3a.1 I-5 should be widened to three lanes in each direction between (a) Delta Park and Lombard and (b) 99th Street and I-205 in Clark County

R 3a.2 The Delta Park to Lombard project should go to construction as quickly as possible.

R 3a.3 The transportation issues south of the I-5/Fremont Bridge junction must be addressed and solved. The Mayor of Portland, the Governor of the State of Oregon, and JPACT should join together to appoint a group of public and private sector stakeholders to study and make recommendations for long-term transportation solutions for the entire I-5/I-405 freeway loop.

seem to indicate that the lowest priority is the area south of the Fremont Bridge interchange. It seems to me that the highest priority for I-5 and Portland traffic flow at this point (aside from expanding mass transportation and supporting bike transportation) should be making sure that the pathways through the center of the city can handle the current traffic load and then some prior to expanding pathways

into the city from further out. Mention was made of the fact that no more than 3 through lanes each was recommended to limit the traffic load increase on 405 to 1%, but as i drive by the 405 interchange, it seems that traffic usually flows well onto the bridge long after it backs up at the 84 interchange. Perhaps my vantage point does not allow me to see the real issue on the other side of the river?

It is obvious from the amount of the Plan devoted to expansion of the Interstate Bridge that that part of the project is the highest priority, but I can't help but notice how that will affect things further south (namely the entire part of my commute spent on I-5). I know this is probably too late to put in my 2 cents, but I think the bridge project happening before everything further south is dealt with is a colossal mistake as it will only move the problem area a few miles further south. Please consider this aspect of the issue.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
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