

Bridge tolls to impact commutes for interstate commuters in Oregon and Southwest Washington

Andrew Nevue



Photo: Michael Goff

Southwest Washington and Portland-metro area commuters will be impacted by bridge tolls within the next 10 years. Transportation officials have suggested tolling all lanes of I-5 and I-205, with the fare to be determined.

With increased congestion during rush-hour traffic, Oregon Department of Transportation officials are crafting a plan to implement tolls on Interstate bridges by 2028.

Local commuters have mixed feelings about the bridge tolling. Paul Nevue, a resident of Vancouver, commutes to Swan Island in Portland for his job in the advertising industry.

“I am very lucky to have a stable job, but the additional cost of bridge tolls might cause me to inquire about working from home,” Nevue explained. Nevue has lived in the area for 20 years and has noticed dramatic changes in traffic, both on highways and local roads.

The Oregon Department of Transportation originally proposed the idea of tolls in late 2017. In a February 2018 article from *The Oregonian*, Portland Bureau of Transportation reported that 26 percent of trips taken in the evening hours could have been taken during different times of the day.

One of the main questions is where should the money collected from tolls be allocated?

Elizabeth Candello, a Native Oregonian who returned to Portland in 2014 after living away for several years, suggested the tolls should be allocated toward infrastructure. Residents also have suggestions on an alternative to the bridge tolling.

“If the intention of the bridge toll is to eliminate traffic, an alternative would be to move forward with MAX Light Rail that runs from N Portland to Vancouver. There’s also an opportunity for Portland businesses to offer work

flexibility for employees to cut down on the early morning commute into Portland and afternoon gridlock” explained Candello.

The Oregon Department of Transportation is expected to release more information in the coming months regarding alternatives. Local politicians are expected to voice their opinions in the coming months before anything is enacted.