



## Press Release and Press Conference

**Embargoed until 3pm on  
Wednesday, October 23rd,  
2024**

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### **Independent Review of IBR Traffic Modeling Questions Analysis of Congestion Points and Comparative Impacts of Build vs. No-build Scenarios**

*Portland OR / Vancouver WA:*

The Just Crossing Alliance (JCA) has commissioned national traffic modeling expert Norman Marshall to conduct an independent review of the traffic modeling for the Interstate Bridge Replacement project, using data from the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) as well as public data and data obtained via public records requests.

Mr. Marshall will present his findings and be available for questions at a virtual press conference at **2pm on October 23rd**. Zoom access is available to media at

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88316438985?pwd=xvburpke3SYPadQ3kd0NarMfxaVhBv.1>**

**Meeting ID: 883 1643 8985**

**Passcode: 505317**

The report is attached (embargoed until 3pm on October 23rd).

Top line findings include:

- Analysis of existing traffic data clearly shows that the Interstate Bridge is not the I-5 bottleneck. Rather, I-5 has two separate bottlenecks, at N. Lombard for AM (southbound) traffic and at N. Victory Boulevard for PM (northbound) traffic.
- Widening the bridge would do nothing to improve I-5 congestion and could make it worse, because expanded bridge capacity will funnel even more traffic into these actual, unresolved bottlenecks.
- The regional model grossly exaggerates future traffic growth because it uses an outdated “static traffic assignment” methodology that ignores the metering effects of sequential bottlenecks. The DSEIS modeling is useless for understanding future traffic conditions because it overstates future traffic growth and fails to account for capacity limitations.
- The existing I-5 freeway could carry much higher vehicle throughput at much higher speeds without widening if oversaturated flow could be prevented through more effective ramp metering and/or tolling. Existing I-5 ramp meters are poorly calibrated and do nothing to prevent the regular “hyper-congestion” that causes slow speeds and low traffic throughput on I-5.

Implementing system-wide tolling on I-5 would actually address the I-5 congestion that the IBR project falsely claims to address. ODOT’s Regional Mobility Pricing Project analysis found that system-wide tolling would improve speeds, and increase throughput.

JCA members reacted to the analysis:

Joe Cortright of City Observatory: “Marshall’s analysis shows that the DSEIS relies on an unrealistic “lemmings” model of traffic that creates the false impression that traffic will continually increase whether the roadway is expanded or not. These exaggerated forecasts are used to paint a false picture of future congestion, and to conceal the negative environmental effects of freeway expansion. And because the IBR doesn’t fix the real bottleneck--which is south of the project area--it will only make congestion worse.”

Joseph Stenger of MCAT (Mobilizing Climate Action Together): “The DSEIS attempts to portray the project as roughly carbon neutral. With over-inflated no-build numbers it’s clear this is not a valid claim.”

Nakisha Nathan, co-Director of Neighbors for Clean Air: “The air quality and health impacts of this project are directly related to the level of traffic. We need accurate data to confidently assess these impacts..”

Chris Smith, co-founder of the No More Freeways campaign: “The DSEIS shows increased travel time for express buses in the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative (MLPA). That was a tip-off that something didn’t make sense in the congestion reduction claims. Now we have some insight into why. The problem isn’t even Rose Quarter (which the IBR modeling assumes will be built), it’s the area between IBR and Rose Quarter. We can’t continue to pursue this model of managing mobility unless we’re committed to continuous freeway expansion forever.”

Sarah Iannarone, Executive Director of The Street Trust: “In HB2017, the Oregon Legislature asked us to look into using congestion pricing in this corridor. This report shows why we need to start managing traffic with congestion pricing and more frequent transit options as soon as possible, and definitely before adding more lanes for cars.”

Mr. Marshall is president of Smart Mobility, a consulting firm based in Thetford Center, Vermont founded in 2001 that offers advanced transportation modeling and planning services. We have worked on significant modeling projects throughout the United States including being the prime contractor with a \$250,000 project with the California Air Resources Board to review advanced travel demand models and land use models.

Mr. Marshall specializes in analyzing the relationships between the built environment and travel behavior and doing planning that coordinates multi-modal transportation with land use and community needs. He has managed transportation projects in over 30 U.S. states including projects for the U.S. government, state transportation departments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, cities, and public interest groups. Areas where Mr. Marshall’s travel demand modeling expertise is nationally recognized include Dynamic Traffic Assignment (“DTA”) accounting for induced travel, and modeling non-motorized trips.

Mr. Marshall has presented his innovative modeling work at many national conferences, including the Transportation Research Board’s Planning Applications conferences in Portland (2019) and Raleigh (2017) and the Transportation Research

Board's Tools of the Trade Conference for Transportation Planning in Small and Medium-Sized Communities in Kansas City (2018).

The Just Crossing Alliance comprises 36 environmental, land use, transportation and environmental justice organizations seeking the most equitable and sustainable outcomes possible from the IBR project. To learn more about the Just Crossing Alliance, please visit [justcrossing.org](http://justcrossing.org)