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PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

I-5 traffic in Portland's Rose Quarter near Harriet Tubman Middle School (behind trees at right). A plan to widen the freeway to ease congestion is moving ahead despite opposition from parents of the school and other groups concerned about air pollution and an increase in vehicle emissions.

Not on Board

Groups align against I-5 expansion

BY DANNY PETERSON THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A coalition of dozens of organizations, small businesses, and Portland community members are worried Oregon Department of Transportation's proposed Rose Quarter freeway project will further worsen the air quality of near-by Harriet Tubman Middle school, among other concerns, despite a recent environmental assessment

from the state agency claiming the opposite would occur.

"Myself and other parents from Tubman--especially the other members' parents of the PTSA--we definitely think it's a bad idea for them to expand a freeway, pretty much behind or close to the school Tubman. I definitely believe that the air quality wouldn't be good for our kids as we're already experiencing bad air there," Tadmika Edwards, president of the Tubman Middle School Parent Teacher Student Association told the Portland Observer.

Edwards is also part of the No More Freeway Expansions

coalition, a group that slammed ODOT's recent claim that the proposed \$450 billion widening of Interstate 5 for a larger segment of roadway in the Rose Quarter district--among other modifications--would actually benefit air quality, decrease carbon emissions, and shorten travel time. The main premise being that a wider freeway in this section will match up to other segments of I-5 and decrease emissions from idling cars and trucks.

The coalition vehemently disputes the claims.

"These findings fly in the face of decades of research in the field of public health, transportation planning and carbon mitigation,

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Comedian is No Show for Trial

A Multnomah county Judge issued an arrest warrant Monday for comedian and actor Katt Williams after he failed to show up for trial on charges of assaulting his chauffeur driver at the Portland Airport last October.

Williams' lawyer stood in his client's place and Judge Kenneth Walker set bail for \$10,000.

The comedian and actor—whose real name is Micah Sierra Williams—earlier pleaded not guilty to a charge of 4th-degree assault for allegedly punching his driver Wali Kanani after Kanani wouldn't let Williams' dog ride in the front seat. Williams was slated



Comedian and actor Katt Williams (AP file photo)

to appear on Nick Cannon's "Wild 'N Out" improv comedy show at the Moda Center at the time.

The chauffeur suffered a broken tooth, laceration to the face, and struggles with chronic migraines and ringing in his ears as a result of the incident, the lawsuit stated. He is asking \$990,000 in compensation and punitive damages.

Williams, who lives in Georgia, could settle the case out of court. In some cases, under the approval of a judge, a monetary compensation may count as a civil compromise that would allow a 4th degree criminal charge to be dismissed in Oregon.