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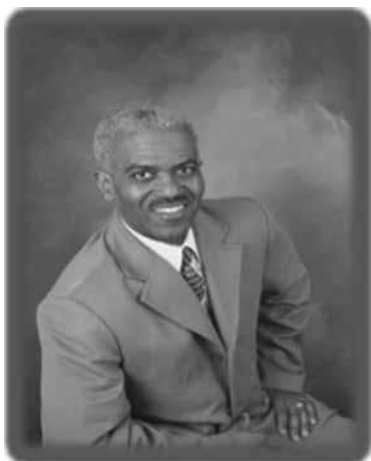
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# Not on Board

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and contradict the numerous headlines we've seen in local and national newspapers throughout the past eighteen months," the coalition said.

Not one urban freeway expansion in North America has successfully lowered congestion levels, due to a phenomenon known as "induced demand," according to the group's website.

The project, which received funding through a 2017 statewide transportation package, would add auxiliary merging lanes throughout the 1.8 mile area broadly between the I-84 and I-405 interchanges on I-5, as well as 12-foot shoulders on both sides of north and southbound travel lanes to make way for emergency vehicles or for minor collisions to be dealt with.

Those additions would cut further into a hillside near Tubman middle school, which is already perched adjacent to the highway, according to a video commissioned by the coalition that used ODOT's own schematics.

A Portland State University study completed back in April warned against Tubman kids

playing outside for extended periods, especially during high traffic times, due to the current poor air quality. Linda A. George, one of the PSU scientists who conducted the study, told Willamette Week that widening I-5 could result in higher concentrations of the pollutants from vehicle exhaust—which include arsenic and petroleum byproducts—and that they could extend further onto the property.

The coalition's stance is that congestion pricing—also known as variable tolling—should be enacted as a way to reduce congestion, instead of widening the freeway. Coalition spokesperson Aaron Brown told the Portland Observer the tolling can be enacted in a way similar to TriMet's low income fare program: discounted or free fares for those who are low income.

He said congestion pricing discounts based on income could mitigate the disproportionate impact the tolling would have on low income communities located near inner north and northeast Portland, such as those who attend Tubman, which has 48.9 percent of its students qualified for free or reduced price meals and is over 68

percent students of color.

The school's proximity to the freeway and the accompanying pollutants was previously addressed by Portland Public Schools by spending \$12.5 million on a new roof and state-of-the-art HVAC system to eliminate toxics in anticipation of its re-opening last fall.

A proposed sound wall, that ODOT included in its assessment, to reduce noise levels of nearby traffic for Tubman was of little comfort to Edwards, who is a parent at the school and also works at Urban League of Portland as an outreach specialist helping the chronically homeless get housed.

"Whether it decreases noise level or not, our concern is more of the air quality," she said.

The public comment period for the proposed I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project will close on Monday, April 1 at 5 p.m. Until then, ODOT will hold a drop-in open house on Thursday, March 7 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Leftbank Annex Clubroom, 101 N. Weidler St; a public hearing on Tuesday, March 12, with speaker sign ups from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., and a program starting at 5 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center, Room A108; and an online open house will be available now through April 1 at [i5rosequarter.org](http://i5rosequarter.org).




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## TriMet Hires Experienced Executive

A transportation industry executive from Seattle will begin working for TriMet this month as its new chief operating officer, supervising the agency's transportation, maintenance, IT and safety and security divisions.

Samuel "Sam" Desue Jr. brings 22 years of public and private transportation experience to Portland.

Desue previously worked in transportation services in the Seattle and Kansas City metropolitan regions. He moved up through the ranks at the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, starting there as the director of transporta-



Sam Desue Jr.

tion in 2013 and serving as chief operating officer, interim general manager and, most recently, deputy chief executive officer.

Desue set priorities for the agency by developing a five-year strategic plan; improving on-time performance; promoting industry best practices and technologies; implementing a safety/security task force; and forging strong partnerships with community and business groups, first responders and city leaders, TriMet officials said.

Prior to Kansas City, Desue

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