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QuickPoint! – Portland Gas Tax: Big Dollars, Minuscule Results

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

This May, Portland voters will be asked to renew the city's 10-cents-a-gallon gas tax. As with the last one, Measure 26-209 promises slightly more than half of the money raised will be used to repair and repave Portland streets.

As with the last measure, while the dollars look big, the results are minuscule. For example, the street paving projects promise an eye-popping \$25 million in spending. But, when you look at the actual projects promised, it adds up to only 7.5 miles of city streets.

But if you look at the breakdown of spending under Measure 26-209, you'll see that many of the projects are designed to *increase* congestion and make things *worse* for drivers paying the gas tax.

- \$4.5 million for Neighborhood Greenways where “bicycles, pedestrians and neighbors are given priority.”
- \$1.5 million for all the Slow Motion plans—Northwest Slow Motion, North Portland Slow Motion, Southwest Slow Motion—all designed to make driving a car more costly.
- \$2 million for speed bumps.

Portlanders voting for Measure 26-209 will be voting to underwrite programs that will make their commutes measurably worse.

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