

## QuickPoint! – Big Questions for Harriet Tubman Middle School Property

By Mia Tiwana

Portland's Harriet Tubman Middle School might be on the move.

[The Oregonian reported last week](#) that Portland Public Schools' board demanded the state pay for the relocation of the school away from the I-5 corridor. PPS claims emissions from the freeway endanger the health of Tubman students, though it's unclear why they didn't express the same care and urgency when Tubman reopened back in 2018.

At first blush, it seems everyone walks away happy. PPS gets a new school. ODOT gets its freeway widening. Never mind that Oregon taxpayers from Coos Bay to Pendleton have to foot the bill.

But another question remains: What will happen to the existing Tubman property?

If Tubman does move, then it'll leave behind an attractive piece of land. The property is on commercial/mixed use zoning, so there are prime opportunities for intense development. It's next to a park, close to the river, three minutes from the freeway entrance, and covers a whopping 100,000 square feet of land.

There are plenty of neighborhood stakeholders who could profit from developing the site. We need to be assured that whoever acquires the property pays the full market value for the site. Taxpayers don't deserve to pay for PPS giving away the site with a sweetheart deal.

The Tubman move may solve awkward problems for PPS and ODOT, but it raises more questions than answers. Cascade will follow what happens to the property, and you should too.

---

*Mia Tiwana is a Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.*

August 11, 2021

Word Count: 239

Attention editors  
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute  
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900  
Fax: (503) 242-3822

[www.cascadepolicy.org](http://www.cascadepolicy.org)  
[info@cascadepolicy.org](mailto:info@cascadepolicy.org)

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900  
f: 503.242.3822  
[info@cascadepolicy.org](mailto:info@cascadepolicy.org)  
[www.cascadepolicy.org](http://www.cascadepolicy.org)

Cascade Policy Institute is a tax-exempt educational organization as defined under IRS code 501 (c)(3). Nothing appearing in this Cascade Commentary is to be construed as necessarily representing the views of Cascade or its donors. The views expressed herein are the author's own.

