



Montgomery to SW Broadway portions. Gibbons and Reed, of Salt Lake City, built the NW Johnson Street-SW Montgomery Street portion (ODOT GF, Cooper, 1966).

With concerns about the visual impact of the freeway through downtown, OSHD went to extra lengths to make the route as attractive as possible (Figure 30).

The people of the city of Portland...did not want the planned freeway to appear as a scar through the heart of their city, so they insisted that measures be taken to insure that this would not happen....To answer the complaints of the citizens, design engineers of the Oregon State Highway Division decided to depress the freeway for much of its length....In one section, 1.17 miles in length, there are 55 retaining walls, 15 overhead structures to permit the free flow of cross traffic, and four tunnel areas. To take the dullness from the retaining walls, three-dimensional design was employed, with a 8-foot by 4-foot recessed and extruded panels arranged in a checkerboard effect (OSHD PR 70-115 Se, 20 May 1970).

Most of the Stadium Freeway was completed and opened to traffic on February 25, 1969. Its final link, the Fremont Bridge, was opened on November 11, 1973, completing Portland's "Inner Loop."

### 2.6.5 I-505 — INDUSTRIAL FREEWAY, NORTH PORTLAND



This proposed freeway spur was to establish an access-controlled connection between I-405 in downtown Portland and the northwest industrial area along Yeon Avenue, to St. Helens Road, a bypass from US 30. Numerous options of varying mileage lengths and estimated costs were considered for this route.

Although some public hearings were held about improving access to this area as early as 1959, the original plans to improve street access in Portland's northeast Industrial Section were first announced by the OSHD in 1963, and hearings were held the following year (ODOT GF, FHWA-OR-EIS-73-08-F, 1977:iii). This project, rather than an Interstate freeway, followed the earlier one-way couplet pattern OSHD had used to improve US 99 during



Figure 30. Interstate 405 “Stadium Freeway” construction, October 1968  
(Source: ODOT GF, Image A362-9).



the early 1950s. In January 1965, the Portland City Council approved the plan and the Federal Highway Administration approved the acquisition of additional right-of-way to allow its construction in November 1965.

In 1968, after the U.S. Congress passed legislation to expand the mileage of the Interstate Highway System, Oregon applied for and received approval for a northwest Portland spur, designated I-505, and known within Oregon as the “Industrial Freeway” (ODOT GF, FHWA-OR-EIS-73-08-F, 1977:1). The original 1.3-mile-long route of the freeway was submitted in early 1971 following consultation with the City of Portland and northwest Portland residents and property owners.

We approve, effective December 13, 1968, [the] addition of the Industrial Freeway in Portland to the Oregon Interstate System... The number designation 505 has been assigned to this route in conformity with the numbering procedures of the American Association of State Highway Officials. (ODOT GF, Lowell Bridwell, letter to Glenn Jackson, 24 December 1968).

As details of the project became widely known, however, local opposition grew and in August 1971 the Northwest District Association withdrew its support for the plan as presented. In September that group, joined by the Oregon Environmental Council and others, filed suit in U.S. District Court asking that all work be halted until a draft Environmental Impact Statement was prepared and filed under NEPA requirements.

By early 1973, four options for the route were under consideration, including three elevated variations and one depressed or sunken route. The depressed route was the least expensive at \$83.7 million, while the elevated options ranged to a high estimated at more than \$130 million. Local concerns over displaced rental housing were joined by commercial interests faced with demolition. ODOT and the City of Portland retained a consultant to further analyze effects, and in July 1973 the “Summary Report of the I-505 Consultant Study” was direct mailed to 10,000 businesses and residents. This document now included five design alternatives.

It is my opinion that one of the critical problems facing the Division in constructing the Industrial Freeway is our ability to respond to the necessary displacement of persons with a relocation plan that will be responsive to the needs and desires of the residents in northwest Portland (ODOT GF, H.S. Coulter, OSHD inter-office memo, 11 January 1973).

In October 1973, the OSHD stated that “a decision on the location of the Industrial Freeway (I-505) in Northwest Portland is moving closer to fruition with a formal public hearing scheduled for October 30” (OSHD PR 73-304-Sem, 19 October 1973). By mid-



November, however, the *Oregonian* editorialized that the Portland Planning Commission and Portland City Council were expected to select from the *six* route options within two weeks, voicing its own support for the so-called “Short Yeon” option, which included both elevated and grade sections, totaling an estimated \$47 million rather than the less expensive “Upshur Corridor” option, estimated at \$30 million.<sup>49</sup> The *Oregonian* however concluded that “unless the final two hearings produce indisputable new information that replacement housing can be produced in Northwest Portland, not somewhere else, the Planning Commission and the City Council should select the Short Yeon route. The neighborhood should not be asked to imperil its future for benefits that will largely be enjoyed by others” (*Oregonian*, 19 November 1973, 30:1-2).

In December 1973, ODOT accepted the City of Portland’s recommendation for the Short Yeon route and it appeared that the project would go forward. A large landowner in the area, feeling it was negatively affected by the proposal, now brought suit in Federal court claiming the EIS was incomplete. On April 30, 1974, U.S. District Court issued a judgment *in favor* of U.S. Steel Corporation against the Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and ODOT, noting failure to comply with Federal law and enjoining continuation of construction until further study was undertaken. The judgment notes that of the fourteen original alternatives, only five were covered within the Environmental Impact Statement, including the Short Yeon, which required the complete taking of U.S. Steel’s facilities in the area (ODOT GF, I-505).

While ODOT mulled alternatives, Federal law regarding withdrawals from the Interstate System changed and it appears that less-expensive solutions were found that were best constructed outside the Interstate Highway system. By December 1978, the City of Portland had passed a resolution withdrawing its support for the I-505 segment in the northwest (ODOT GF, Lee Johnson, memo to Governor Vic Atiyeh, 15 December 1978). In early 1979, Governor Atiyeh petitioned the Federal Highway Administration for withdrawal of the I-505 Industrial Freeway from the system and the allocation of those funds for other transportation related projects in the area.

We have completed our review of your proposal and have determined that Interstate Route 505 is not essential to the completion of a unified and connected Interstate system. ....the length of the withdrawn route is 3.17 miles. The current amount of Federal funds authorized by this withdrawal for substitute projects serving the Portland urbanized area is \$134.4 million (ODOT GF, Karl S. Bowers, FHWA, letter to Vic Atiyeh, 14 December 1979).

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<sup>49</sup> These six routes, including the far less expensive Short Yeon, do not appear to be directly related the four routes for the Industrial Freeway considered in early 1973, thus accounting for the decline in project cost.



As a result of indexing, the available funding from the Industrial Freeway grew to \$154 million (ODOT GF, Moehring, letter to Michael C. McGuire, 13 July 1982). In addition to funding traffic improvements in Northwest Portland, the Industrial Freeway withdrawal provided \$15 million in funding for the Banfield Transitway Project, \$7.4 million for the ODOT fund, and \$21 million for improvements on SE 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, SE Powell Boulevard, Oregon 217, the Sunset Highway, and Oregon 212. Other projects benefiting from this withdrawal included the Hollywood Business District, Holgate Bridge, the Willamette Greenway, and street light and transportation improvements for Swan Island and Columbia Boulevard (*Oregon Journal*, 15 December 1979).



### 2.6.6 I-80N -- MT. HOOD FREEWAY

This route was intended to replace the earlier Banfield as the western end of Interstate 80N (now I-84) running from I-205 on the east to the East Bank Freeway section of I-5. Various routes were considered for the freeway, which was approximately five miles in length and would have run concurrently with about 2.5 miles of I-205 before heading east along the present route of I-84. The route roughly parallels US 26 on Powell Boulevard, but would have been a full access-controlled and grade-separated freeway built to Interstate standards.

As noted earlier, the Banfield Freeway was Oregon’s first modern expressway, built before the adoption of the Interstate and its standardized designs. The proposed replacement of the Banfield as the primary eastern access into the downtown Portland area was likely related to a desire to provide a straighter, curve-free, and slightly shorter route than the Banfield offered.<sup>50</sup> In April 1965, the Portland Planning Commission had presented a report to the City Council recommending a new I-80N route known as Division-Powell, roughly paralleling those streets, because this route “respects and harmonizes with steps being taken in local planning and school construction to create and enhance a better environment for homes in these neighborhoods...” (ODOT GF, Portland Planning Commission, April 1965).

OSHD, in coordination with the City of Portland, largely accepted the Division-Powell recommendation and moved forward to seek approval for the Mt. Hood Freeway project.

<sup>50</sup> The financial ramifications of the Mt. Hood Freeway, which would be largely paid for by the Federal Government, vs. the Banfield, which had, at least initially, been largely paid for by the State, likely played a role as well.