

# Foes sue to halt NW Portland freeway

Neighborhood groups and individuals opposed to the I-505 and I-405 freeways through Northwest Portland Friday filed a class action suit in U.S. District Court.

Freeway opponents are seeking a temporary restraining order and permanent injunction against further acquisition of right-of-way for the projects and displacement of residents, claiming federal environmental guidelines are being ignored.

Named as defendants are the U.S. Department of Transportation, State of Oregon Highway Division and the City of Portland.

Joined as plaintiffs are: The Willamette Heights Neighborhood Association (WHNA), the Northwest District Association (NDA), the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC), Friendly House and a number of individuals.

NDA President George Sheldon said Friday, "The federal environmental guidelines are set to protect the people. We feel the state thinks only of moving traffic and nothing else."

Morton Paglin, head of the WHNA, said he was concerned over the "disastrous consequences" he believes would be caused by I-505. "There would be an impact on the neighborhood's residential character, com-

pounded by traffic congestion from the number of off and on ramps."

Paglin called for a study of alternate routes, adding that his group and the NDA were willing to work with the city in requesting the implementation of the required federal guidelines.

He said there had been no corridor hearings, which, according to federal guidelines, are required before the state conducts design hearings. Design hearings are scheduled for this fall.

At present, the I-505 plan indicates a corridor between NW Thurman and Vaughn Streets, from the Fremont Bridge to NW St. Helens Road.

In a plan prepared by the city planning staff last spring — paid for by the state at a cost of \$40,000 — planners proposed depressing the route below ground level to act as a buffer between residential and industrial areas.

Sheldon said the corridor would displace about 400 people and affect some 200 housing units and seven businesses.

One resident of the area Mrs. DeAnn Lehl of 1922 NW 21st Ave., said Friday she received condemnation papers from the state the day before.

"They told me I had ten

days to appear in court if I didn't like the price they offered for my two houses," she said. "They offered me \$16,000 and I've already had them appraised for more than that. Where can I find another place at today's prices?"

Under a restraining order, condemnations would be halted, Sheldon explained.

The injunction could also affect the proposed closure of Harbor Drive, tentatively scheduled for 1973, upon completion of the Fremont Bridge and I-505 off-ramps.