

Impact statement ordered for I-505 freeway corridor

U.S. District Judge Alfred T. Goodwin Friday ordered state and federal highway officials to prepare an environmental impact statement and to hold design hearings on the controversial I-505 freeway corridor proposed for Northwest Portland.

The order followed nearly a month and a half of deliberation and was contained among a number of opinions pertaining to a trial last October.

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

Plaintiffs included northwest neighborhood groups, environmentalists, businessmen and residents who contended highway officials had failed to hold public hearings, had violated federal environmental requirements and who maintained I-405 off-ramps from the Fremont Bridge, now nearing completion, predetermined the I-505 route.

Goodwin's opinion Friday refused plaintiffs a requested injunction against the I-405 off-ramps, stating the ramps were properly authorized and

necessary to provide a bridge exit to the ground.

He added, however, that completion of the I-405 ramps in no way fixes alignment of I-505. Further, Goodwin said that if I-505 alignment was not suitable for the ramps, the ramps would have to be moved or modified.

Goodwin gave highway officials 30 days in which to prepare environmental impact statements and alternates to I-505, ordering the design hearing within 60 days. He also enjoined any further acquisition of right-of-way on I-505 until a final route has been determined.

George Sheldon, president of the Northwest District Association, which, with the Willamette Heights Neighborhood Association, had been instrumental in bringing the matter to court, said he was delighted.

"We got everything we could possibly ask for," Sheldon said. "Goodwin has specified a timetable to the highway people, and essentially is telling them they must consider the desires of a neighborhood group."