

Moving to Our Future:

Pricing Options for *Equitable Mobility*



Community Task Force Meeting #4 – Meeting Summary

April 20, 2020 | 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Relevant Materials

Please find links to relevant materials below:

- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Recording](#)
- [Meeting Presentation Slides](#)
- [Revised Draft Equitable Mobility Framework](#)
- [Untokening's Mobility Justice Response to COVID-19](#)
- [City Council letter on ODOT Value Pricing project](#)
- [Pricing for Equitable Mobility Website](#)

Attendance

Present:

Task Force Members	City Staff	Bureau
Violeta Alvarez	Justin Jackson	Transportation
Andy Cotugno	Tony Jordan	Transportation
Baofeng Dong	Ady Leverette	Transportation
Taren Evans	Elizabeth Liedel Turnbull	BPS
Stephanie Frederick	Tammy Lundervold	Transportation
Monique Gaskins	Esme Miller	Transportation
Aaron Grimmer	Nicole Phillips	Transportation
Hau Hagedorn	Richa Poudyal	Transportation
Nathan Hambley	Sherifa Roach	Transportation
Shani Harris-Bagwell	Vivian Satterfield	BPS
Jonathan Hutchison	Sara Wright	

Absent:

Task Force Members

Brian Cooley PK Mandel Ashton Simpson

Agenda

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
6:00 p.m.	Welcome & Housekeeping
6:15 p.m.	Project Updates
6:30 p.m.	Revisiting Equitable Mobility <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated draft Equitable Mobility Framework• Information and resource sharing• Discussion
7:20 p.m.	Wrap-up & Next Steps

Welcome & Housekeeping

Emma Sagor, Facilitator, welcomed Task Force members and informed attendees that the meeting will be recorded to ensure Task Force members and those unable to attend will have access.

Opening Remarks

Shoshana Cohen, Project Manager, thanked Task Force members for attending the meeting and providing opening remarks to put the Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility Task Force's work into current COVID-19 context. She noted:

- Life has changed dramatically since the group last met, and staff appreciate everyone taking time to engage virtually under these extraordinary circumstances.
- The transportation system has also changed remarkably since the group last met. Congestion and vehicle miles traveled have reduced significantly, while we're seeing an increase in speeding on our roadways.
- Even during this period of pandemic, transportation inequities persist, and many are heightened.
- As the City thinks about how we will eventually recover from this crisis, we hope that we can recover in a way that prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable.
- **This period is a time of great uncertainty but can also be a time to encourage maximum creativity.**
- It is more important than ever to make sure that the price signals that we send related to our transportation system match the values we have around equity, safety and climate.
- The project timelines and considerations shared before may need to adjust going forward to respond to current and changing conditions as it may be more challenging than ever to do this work

Public Comment

The City will be collecting public comment throughout the entire 18-month Task Force process via email, regular mail, phone, and written and verbal comments at public events. At each meeting, Task Force members will be provided a written report of public comments received since the last meeting.

To share comments with the Pricing for Equitable Mobility Task Force, please email comments and questions to POEMComments@portlandoregon.gov. All comments received via email by the Friday before a Task Force meeting (which occur the second Monday of each month) will be recorded and shared with the Task Force at the meeting. While members of the public were in attendance, no public comments were presented during this meeting and no public comments were received through other means prior to Meeting #4.

Project Updates

COVID-19 Impact on this Work

Shoshana Cohen discussed how the work of the Task Force may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Slowing down (a bit)**
 - Picking up parking lot items and more in May
 - Future meeting topics may adjust based on context
- **Ongoing conversations at the City**
 - How do we meet the immediate needs of our community?
 - What can we learn during this time? (About telework, transit, active transportation, road space allocation, safety in the public way, etc.)
 - How can we rebuild in a more equitable, sustainable way?
- **This work remains vital!**

Update on ODOT & Metro Pricing Project Processes

Shoshana Cohen gave a brief update and overview of ongoing pricing projects being led by Metro & the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

I-5 and I-205 Tolling Projects (ODOT)

- ODOT is moving forward with the next phase of work around tolling on I-5 & I-205 in the Portland region.

- The I-205 project, focused on the area around the Abernethy Bridge, is moving into environmental review through the NEPA process, which is expected to last through 2022
- The I-5 project, focused on the stretch between SW Multnomah Blvd and N Going/Alberta St, will move slower. ODOT expects to refine alternatives for this project through 2021, with NEPA review beginning late next year.
- The goals of the tolling projects as stated by ODOT are to manage congestion and raise revenue for congestion relief projects.
- Following the meeting, staff will share the letter Portland City Council provided to ODOT during the feasibility analysis phase, which included qualified support for advancing the two projects to the next phase of analysis and environmental review as well as the policy objectives the City wants to see centered in any pricing program.
- ODOT is currently recruiting for an Equity & Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) to advise on the tolling projects as they move through the NEPA phase. Task Force members are invited to share the opportunity with their networks or to apply personally if interested. If Task Force members do choose to apply, they are asked to inform staff. PBOT and ODOT are coordinating on how the two projects will intersect, and PBOT will likely have a staff member serve on the EMAC, and this individual will act as a liaison to the Task Force.

Regional Congestion Pricing Study (Metro)

- Metro's Regional Congestion Pricing Study is a technical modeling project to understand how the region may be able to use congestion pricing to manage traffic and climate goals without adversely impacting and potentially improving safety and equity
- The Metro team will use modeling to evaluate the technical feasibility and performance of 4 different pricing tools in the region:
 1. Cordon: vehicles pay to enter/travel in a congested area
 2. Vehicle Miles Traveled/Road User Charge: a charge based on how many miles are traveled
 3. Roadway: a direct charge to use a specific roadway or specific roadways
 4. Parking: charges to park in specific areas
- Metro's technical work is beginning this spring, and results are expected by early 2021.
- Technical analysis from Metro's study will help to inform the Task Force's future discussions as it is available.

Revisiting Equitable Mobility

Michael Espinoza recapped edits made to the Equitable Mobility Framework based on feedback received at the Meeting #3 Workshop.

Overall Feedback & Changes:

- No major categories were considered missing from the draft Equitable Mobility Framework shared at the March meeting.
- Based on feedback, staff moved the “**who** we are prioritizing” section of the framework to the front and clarified that the Task Force will lead with race in its analysis, in compliance with City policy.
- Staff also reframed several indicator descriptions to be forward looking for consistency throughout the framework.

Indicator Changes | Moving People and Goods:

- Clarified “efficiency” description to include both *time* and *space*
- Clarified “availability” description to highlight *abundance of choice*
- Added “quality” indicator to capture comfort and amenities that make mobility options attractive choices

Indicator Changes | Safety:

- Clarified “personal safety” description to capture perceptions of safety in the public realm (beyond just while using transportation options)

Indicator Changes | Economic Opportunity:

- Simplified language and made indicators more direct
 - Includes: job creation, quality of jobs, labor practices, connected, thriving local economy
- Reflected feedback from workshop on how economic opportunity is distinct from moving people and goods

Indicator Changes | Equitable Transportation Planning Process:

- Changed name from “process equity” to be more specific and reflect discussion at March meeting about the importance of involving BIPOC communities and considering their perspectives in the planning process
- Added “accountability and evaluation” indicator

Task Force Comments

Task Force members recommended the personal safety description be revised to reflect not just perceptions of personal safety, given perceptions can often be distorted by personal biases.

Framework Purpose

- *Emma Sagor explained how the Task Force will utilize the Equitable Mobility Framework moving forward:* The Equitable Mobility Framework helps us articulate and identify

key needs and interests so we can form **pricing policy positions** grounded in a shared understanding of **equitable mobility**

- The Task Force will use the Framework primarily in two ways:
 - To inform **decision making** and guide **policy analysis** around pricing strategies, including
 - What **questions** should we ask, and when, as we consider policy options?
 - What **data** and qualitative information do we have today, and what can we realistically gather?
 - What disparities exist today, and how do **policy options** help address those disparities?
 - To inform conversations around how pricing options may **extend benefits and reduce disparities** for BIPOC communities

COVID-19 Equity Impacts

COVID-19 Changes to the Transportation System & Task Force Work

- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, PBOT has observed dramatic reduction in VMT in the Portland region (as much as 80% reduced daily VMT). This is reflective of “immobility” and other devastating costs, not voluntary behavior change
- We are also seeing parallel declines in transit, bike and scooter-share rates.
- Our sensors are also revealing that there is a sharp increase in speeding during this time, impacting safety.
- For business activity that can be handled remotely, teleworking rates are increasing dramatically, with speculation whether any of these trends will result in long term behavior change
- The “status quo” against which we were forecasting “what would equitable mobility in Portland look like” last month is radically different. And while that may not wholly change the future we want to see, it may change what we prioritize or how we want to approach that question.

Mobility Justice Lens for COVID-19 Response

- Our conversations on equitable mobility are not happening in a vacuum. There are many organizations and groups considering the same questions we are
 - The Untokening Collective recently released a resource [“Mobility Justice Responses to COVID-19.”](#)
 - We encourage Task Force members to share similar resources and we will post them to the Task Force website and circulate to the group.

Discussion

Task Force members engaged in a discussion around the following questions:

Reflections on COVID-19 and mobility:

1. What are you **experiencing and learning about our mobility system** as a result of the COVID crisis?
2. Given that, **should we make any refinements to our draft Equitable Mobility Framework?** Are there any parts we should **particularly prioritize** in this moment?

Looking forward

3. Knowing we haven't had the chance to deep dive yet into pricing, **are there creative solutions you think we should be considering right now** related to pricing?
4. Given our current conditions of zero congestion, what thoughts do you have on the **phasing of this pricing work to ensure we are strategic and equitable** as we rebuild?

Task Force Comments & Questions

Task Force comments have been grouped thematically and summarized below.

Reflections on COVID-19 and mobility

- **Essential nature of public transit**
 - Task Force members noted that public transportation becomes the first and last line of support for essential workers when other options aren't available. One member referenced a recent Jarrett Walker article (['In a Pandemic—We're all Transit Dependent'](#)) that discusses how transit keeps society going during a crisis.
 - The COVID crisis shines a light on the essential nature of transit and the importance of investing in it to make it robust and resilient. Some members said this reinforces why transit should be free. Others discussed the impact of reducing service on those who still need to ride transit.
 - Task Force members expressed concerns over the current and future state of transit given what happened to transit during the recession, which revealed how vulnerable transit is to ridership rates and the economy.
- **Connection between transportation demand, economy and infrastructure**
 - Some Task Force members said the pandemic illuminates the connection between employment, the demand for transportation, and the size of transportation infrastructure. Some remarked that many current conversations are about expanding infrastructure to allow more people to

move around, and when this mobility demand declines as it has during Stay at Home, the need for that expansion disappears.

- Some Task Force members said this reinforces the need to look at the connections between housing, employment and transportation.
- **Active transportation and right-of-way space**
 - Task Force members noted an increase in the number of people they observe walking and biking.
 - Some Task Force members noted other cities like Oakland, CA have limited traffic on streets to encourage more physically distant active transportation in the right of way. Some asked if Portland would do the same.
 - Staff shared that the City of Portland is centering all decisions on public health and equity, and said PBOT is still considering options.
 - [Update since Meeting #4: 'Portland Transportation Commissioner Chloe Eudaly Announces New Slow Streets | Safe Streets Initiative'](#)
 - Some Task Force members noted the connection between more active transportation and improved public health.
- **Safety in the public realm**
 - A Task Force member noted that public spaces are always contested spaces, and different people are treated differently when in the public realm. While running/walking/recreating may be seen as “free activities”, being in a public space means you are potentially subject to the prejudice and discrimination of others in that space.
 - Some Task Force members shared stories of harassment and profiling that has occurred during the pandemic. One member noted that some people are nervous to access essential services out of concern they will be stopped and asked where they are going.
 - Some Task Force members noted observing more aggressive behavior by drivers during this time, which can create unsafe conditions.
- **Need for inclusive & equitable crisis response**
 - A Task Force member shared that they work with individuals with limited English proficiency frequently and have heard that the constantly changing guidelines have been confusing for these communities, especially given the delay associated with translation. This member also noted the importance of stopping misinformation and using decisive, clear messaging and action to avoid misinterpretation.
 - Task Force members discussed the importance of asking who is the system working for and whose needs are being prioritized? Some said they feel heartened by how community is rallying around some groups (e.g the restaurant industry) but that this is not happening for all.
- **Equity in mobility quality**
 - Task Force members shared that transportation quality, cleanliness, and health are now top of mind. Some shared that people shouldn't be penalized for not having a car by having to utilize less clean, healthy and safe options,

noting the need for equal *quality* of transportation (clean, comfortable) comes to the fore in a situation like this when the implication could be life or death.

- A Task Force member shared that a more detailed understanding of public health impacts of our transportation system may help the group understand the ramifications of the status quo compared to the behaviors we want to encourage and how want to talk about them in this context.

Looking forward

- **Specific strategies of interest**

- Task Force members discussed two specific strategies of potential interest for future conversations:
 - Enabling PBOT to make parking pricing decisions more dynamically and responsively, rather than the current process of seeking Council approval
 - Exploring a parking cash-out policy which would require employers who subsidize or provide free parking to allow their employees the option to “cash-out” that value for use on other mobility options.
- These ideas will be brought forward to future meetings.
- A Task Force member asked if other options beyond pricing were considered by staff.
 - Shoshana Cohen explained this group’s charge is to explore if and how new pricing strategies might help advance equitable mobility and address the climate crisis. No decisions have been made. The current status quo is inequitable, and this group will explore whether pricing is one tool that could improve those inequities. The Bureau is engaged in many other efforts beyond pricing as well that seek to advance equitable mobility.

- **Learning from the COVID-19 pandemic to inform this work**

- Task Force members noted the COVID-19 pandemic reveals the power of collective action to solve problems and make sweeping change in our mobility system.
- Task Force members discussed the need for the Equitable Mobility Framework to be a flexible document, noting the group may prioritize different parts of the Framework based on the current conditions of the time.
- Task Force members discussed the theme of resilience and the importance of learning from this crisis to prepare for the next.
- Several Task Force members discussed the opportunity to learn from this situation, including around topics like the potential of telework, drivers of behavior change (e.g. parallels to PBOT’s SmartTrips program), the importance of green transportation jobs and more.

- Task Force members discussed this being a time for creative solutions. Some suggested staff create space in upcoming meetings to explore what we are learning about equitable mobility in this time of a public health crisis.

Wrap-up & Next Steps

Emma Sagor thanked participants for their participation and gave an overview of the next phase of Task Force work.

Next meeting:

May 11, 6 – 8 p.m.

Next meeting topics:

- More guidance on recommendation process and decision point milestones
- Pricing landscape:
 - Strategies to explore with this group
 - Update on ODOT and Metro processes