

## ***Moving to Our Future:***

### *Pricing Options for **Equitable Mobility***



**PBOT**  
PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION



### **POEM Community Task Force:**

Feedback summary on highway tolling questions

*Comments gathered on September 14 meeting*

# Feedback summary on highway tolling questions

	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> <i>How could highway tolling advance equitable mobility in this category?</i>	<b>RISKS OR CONCERNS + ADDITIONAL INFO</b> <i>What concerns do we have about the impact of highway tolling on equitable mobility? What additional information would help us understand these impacts?</i>	<b>REVENUE REINVESTMENT</b> <i>Could revenue reinvestment further improve equitable mobility? What revenue reinvestment areas would you prioritize?</i>
<b>MOVING PEOPLE &amp; GOODS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Efficiency</li> <li>- Affordability</li> <li>- Connectivity</li> <li>- Availability</li> <li>- Reliability</li> <li>- Accessibility</li> <li>- Quality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Tolling has the potential to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and improve reliability on our system, making it easier for people and goods to get where they need to go predictably and on time. Overall, it could improve the quality of trips and provide express routes for those who need them.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tolling could help accommodate growing demand while not expanding supply by making the system more efficient.</li> <li>• Other cities that have implemented tolling have seen increased efficiency, improved reliability, and reduced VMT.</li> <li>• As highways become more efficient and effectively managed traffic that is currently diverting today could come back, actually benefitting local roads.</li> <li>• Discretionary trips could decrease, encouraging people to drive only when they need to.</li> <li>• People may switch to non-rush hour trips if they can travel at different times.</li> <li>• Freight/commercial traffic can be a cause of congestion on Portland roadways; tolling can help to reduce more discretionary trips and allow for freer flow for critical commercial vehicles.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Any toll program should analyze potential diversion impacts onto local streets and be designed to ensure the cost of tolls are not a burden for low-income Portlanders who have to travel on highways. Toll programs should be designed to prioritize demand management and benefits for BIPOC communities over revenue generation.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anything impacting price will have disproportional impact on low-income households</li> <li>• Tolling could benefit wealthier people who can afford to pay more than it benefits low-income people</li> <li>• Toll rates may need to be higher to truly impact demand, further burdening low-income households</li> <li>• Transportation choices are limited for many; viable alternatives may not exist today and some people need to drive</li> <li>• Displacement and gentrification have pushed BIPOC and low-income Portlanders further out, where car use is more necessary</li> <li>• Could negatively impact small businesses or industries that need to travel on highways (e.g. landscaping businesses)</li> <li>• Tolloed lanes may not be possible in Portland context</li> <li>• We need to consider “carrots,” not just sticks</li> <li>• Use of the revenue is key and certain revenue uses may be essential if tolling is to benefit BIPOC communities</li> <li>• Diversion onto local roads to avoid paying the toll could have impacts in neighborhoods (but also need to consider diversion occurring today because of congestion)</li> <li>• The fact that we would be the “first” city to do this shouldn’t be seen as an advantage or goal; feels like a top-down approach</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional information desired:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the demographics of peak time highway users?</li> <li>• Who uses highways to travel into downtown?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Tolling revenue should be used to support the availability of non-auto options that make drive-alone trips less necessary and improve connectivity and accessibility for all, especially BIPOC Portlanders. Revenue should not be prioritized for capacity expansion or projects that have negative community or environmental impacts.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong interest in supporting transit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased and expanded service and/or coverage (including inter-city)</li> <li>○ Transit priority lanes</li> <li>○ Stop and bus improvements</li> <li>○ More routes using highways (e.g. bus on shoulder)</li> <li>○ Park and rides</li> <li>○ Fare assistance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Constitutional restriction is a major question/concern <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If revenue can’t be used towards rebates or transit service improvements, some feel this would not be sufficient</li> <li>○ There may not be enough space on our highways to make the necessary transit improvements in existing right-of-way</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Need to be specific about what tolls will cost</li> <li>• Need to consider ways to reduce burden of means testing for potential low-income exemptions (e.g. use a “universal basic income” standard for all mobility programs; use existing means testing information TriMet low-income fare qualification)</li> <li>• Consider charging different amounts for different vehicles based on impact/values (e.g. more for SUVs, less for HOVs)</li> <li>• Consider other improvements in the corridor (e.g., sound walls)</li> <li>• Revenue should not be used for capacity increase/expansion</li> </ul>

<p><b>SUSTAINABILITY &amp; HEALTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climate impacts</li> <li>- Air quality</li> <li>- Health impacts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Because of the potential to reduce VMT and support other, more sustainable modes, tolling has the potential to improve air quality and reduce climate and health impacts from pollution.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People may be inclined to use more sustainable modes like transit as they become more attractive (in terms of cost, speed, improvements from reinvestment, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tolling could open up capacity and allow for transit lanes on highways</li> </ul> </li> <li>• By reducing overall VMT and associated emissions and pollution, tolling has ability to improve the climate and health outcomes, but only if revenue is not used for highway expansion.</li> <li>• Reducing pollution from highways could improve health and life expectancy for folks who live in high exposure areas near these facilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Toll systems should be designed to prioritize demand management/VMT reduction, because if VMT is just diverted or if capacity is then expanded to allow more trips, the climate, air quality and health benefits may not be realized.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement with staff hypothesis, but also would like to see more nuance to this statement (not all VMT has the same environmental impact, e.g., EVs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Demand management, VMT and climate impacts are not all connected and should have some parsing.</li> <li>○ Congestion is <u>not</u> responsible for greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction itself; it is the driving and the fuels associated with the driving that is causing harm to the climate.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If you ease congestion, you may attract more drivers. People will put up with a certain amount of congestion no matter what.</li> <li>• Tolling is not the only strategy for achieving sustainability outcomes; raising fuel costs should also be looked at</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional information desired:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does diversion impact air quality? Moving the problem to another place, neighborhoods?</li> <li>• What are the impacts of technology (e.g. GPS navigation apps) on diversion, VMT and associated impacts? Will technology just allow people to circumvent highways and make these issues worse?</li> <li>• Conversion of existing lanes to transit use, e.g. transit nodes in the Bay: at what distance of travel does that idea perform best?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Revenue should be prioritized for non-auto modes to maximize climate and health benefits, including transit, biking and walking, and access to/exemptions for cleaner fuel or electric vehicles.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need better land use planning alongside transportation to locate services, amenities, etc.</li> <li>• Constitutional restriction is a major question/concern</li> <li>• Should look at infrastructure like soundwalls, street design changes, and other investments that can help mitigate noise, dust and pollution</li> <li>• With new infrastructure, e.g. new Columbia River bridge, have a park &amp; ride right before the toll to give people the meaningful option to use transit</li> </ul>
<p><b>SAFETY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traffic safety</li> <li>- Personal safety</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Reduced VMT and improved congestion would help reduce traffic safety risks.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General agreement with the hypothesis and link between VMT reduction and safety (though several concerns and further questions identified in next column)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> More study is needed on toll enforcement and how toll systems can be designed to avoid any risks to personal safety or discrimination. Potential traffic safety impacts on surrounding streets must also be analyzed as tolling systems are designed.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement concerns: need to reduce and limit possible discrimination and consider safety implications of mode shift (e.g. address disparities in personal safety experienced on transit and while biking and walking by BIPOC Portlanders) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need to work closely with community organizations/stakeholders to unpack impact of enforcement and do this work early on, not at the end of program design.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lower VMT may or may not correlate to decreased safety. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If there are fewer cars and cars are going faster there may be associated safety concerns.</li> <li>○ The size of the car has impacts on other road users and safety as well.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Privacy and data needs inclusion in the safety category. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Users may feel this is an infringement on independence and privacy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Revenue investment in non-auto options as well as safety projects can help improve the overall safety of the transportation system.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about the impacts of diversion on safety of neighborhood streets.</li> <li>Tolling plazas can have their own safety issues.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job creation</li> <li>Working conditions</li> <li>Connected, thriving, local economy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Improving the efficiency of our highways benefits freight movement, shipping reliability and commerce. Toll programs and construction of toll infrastructure could generate jobs.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time is an expensive cost (e.g. childcare); improvements in travel time is a benefit to workers.</li> <li>Highway construction jobs are temporary; toll programs and efficient highway management could support more sustainable, long-term job creation.</li> <li>High land prices have displaced communities of color. More efficient highways could increase ability to access jobs quickly and reliably (grow the job watershed).</li> <li>Variable or time-of-day pricing can be tuned to the economic activity patterns of our system. Applying supply and demand principles to our transportation network.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> Any potential impact on affordability or contribution to gentrification or displacement pressures should be evaluated and mitigated through tolling system design.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about high combined cost of housing + transportation and displacement pressures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability should be tied to the purpose of the program</li> </ul> </li> <li>Many people have multiple jobs (e.g. gig economy jobs) that require frequent and diverse travel.</li> <li>Need to balance limiting freight and its negative externalities and encouraging more free flowing conditions for freight. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are many different aspects of freight (through freight versus local delivery versus trans-loaded freight) with different impacts on the system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Need to be careful about engagement especially because we are asking folks to pay for something that they currently get for free. Hard to understand value proposition.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional information desired</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actual toll rate (price) needs to be part of the analysis. What would it take to actually influence demand?</li> <li>Urban freight mobility impacts are unknown.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staff draft hypothesis:</b> If revenue is reinvested in improving options throughout the mobility corridors around the highways, this can have an overall positive impact on economic activity. Job opportunities generated through toll project development or revenue reinvestment should be prioritized for BIPOC workforce.</p> <p><b>Task Force feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic opportunity issue should be tied to the scope of the project (analysis, reinvestment, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider impacts to/opportunities around Local Improvement Districts (LIDs), local circulation, access into redevelopment areas, etc.</li> <li>This should relate to the freeway itself and the surrounding area.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Use revenue for affordable housing to address transportation costs (especially for those who have been displaced by past projects)</li> <li>Concern about changes needed at ODOT to realize goals</li> <li>Could revenue be used to improve equitable access to cars for high proportion of BIPOC households that do not have them today?</li> </ul>