

Moving to Our Future: Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility

Task Force Meeting #10

November 9, 2020



Zoom orientation



General guidelines for Task Force members:

- Mute when you're not speaking
- Hold questions and comments for designated discussion times
- "Raise your hand" when you'd like to speak (found in participants tab)

For audience members:

- We ask that you mute yourself and turn your video off, except during public comment opportunities

Please keep the chat open for technical troubleshooting



Agenda

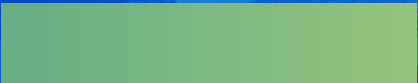
Time	Agenda item
6:00 p.m.	Welcome and housekeeping <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agenda review• Finalize meeting #8 summary• Public comment• Project updates
6:20 p.m.	Highway tolling: Confirming emerging themes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why we're doing this now• Review emerging themes• Explore and discuss supplemental information• Document key questions for further exploration
7:40 p.m.	What comes next? Previewing next pricing typologies
7:55 p.m.	Looking forward and wrap up



Meeting #9 Summary

Any questions or edits before finalizing?





Public Comment

(POEMcomments@portlandoregon.gov)





Project updates

What's changed since the last time we met?

- Election - City Council Changes
- Metro Regional Congestion Pricing Study ongoing
- Staff hoping to connect with Task Force members in November/December
- Further refinement to the Task Force workplan



Revised Task Force work plan

November

- Discuss and confirm emerging tolling themes
- Review further info on current conditions & forecasts
- Sneak peek on cordons, area pricing and road usage charges



December

No Task Force meeting



January

- Cordons and area pricing
- Road Usage Charges



February - March

- Commercial services



April - May

- **Bring it all together:**
- Review emerging ideas across all typologies (parking, tolling, cordons, RUC, & commercial services)
- Consult technical tools & share additional research to understand how typologies interact &



June - July (August?)

- Finalize recs
- Complete final report



Highway Tolling:
Confirming Emerging
Themes



Why stick with tolling for this month's meeting?

- Great discussion at last 2 meetings; want to confirm we've captured themes accurately
- Regional tolling conversation is active. Potential near-term opportunities to share emerging themes with Portland leadership & inform live conversations
- These themes also may apply to future typologies. Confirming now could jumpstart future conversations.

Emerging themes from Task Force

PBOT and BPS leadership

City Council

Ongoing regional pricing conversations:

I-5/I-205 toll projects
ODOT's Tolling Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee
Oregon Transportation Commission toll program decisions

Discussion plan for tonight

- Review what the Task Force discussed last month—three topics:
 - Tolling and equitable mobility
 - Tolling system design and priority outcomes
 - Tolling revenue and complementary strategies
- Look at some supplemental information from the POEM technical team for further context
- Discuss emerging themes:
 - Are we missing anything or mischaracterizing anything?
- Vote at end: **Do these themes capture the Task Force sentiments to date?**

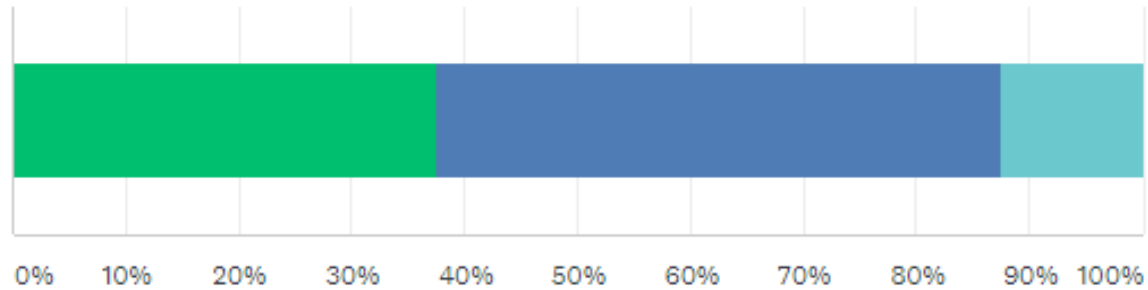


Topic 1: Tolling and Equitable Mobility



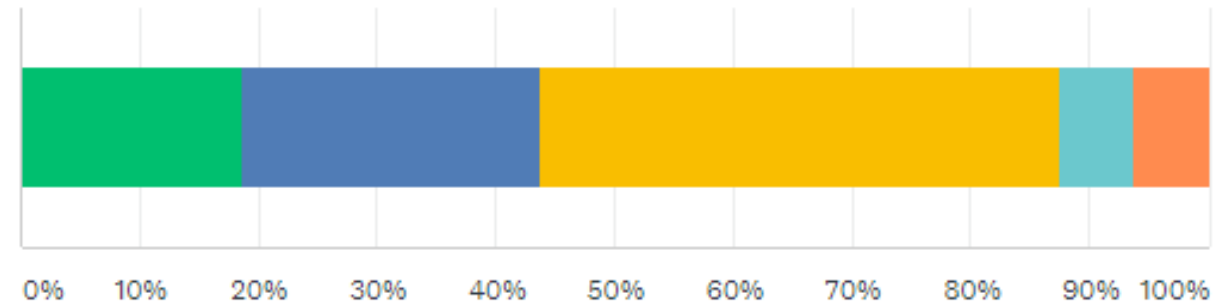
What we heard last time: Tolling and equitable mobility

Highway tolling has the potential to increase equitable mobility



- Strongly agree: Could reduce VMT & costs of status quo, even if some pay more
- Somewhat agree: Could with the right design, discounts & revenue investments
- Somewhat disagree: Concerned impacts might outweigh the benefits
- Strongly disagree: I don't believe tolling can advance equitable mobility
- Don't know/not sure

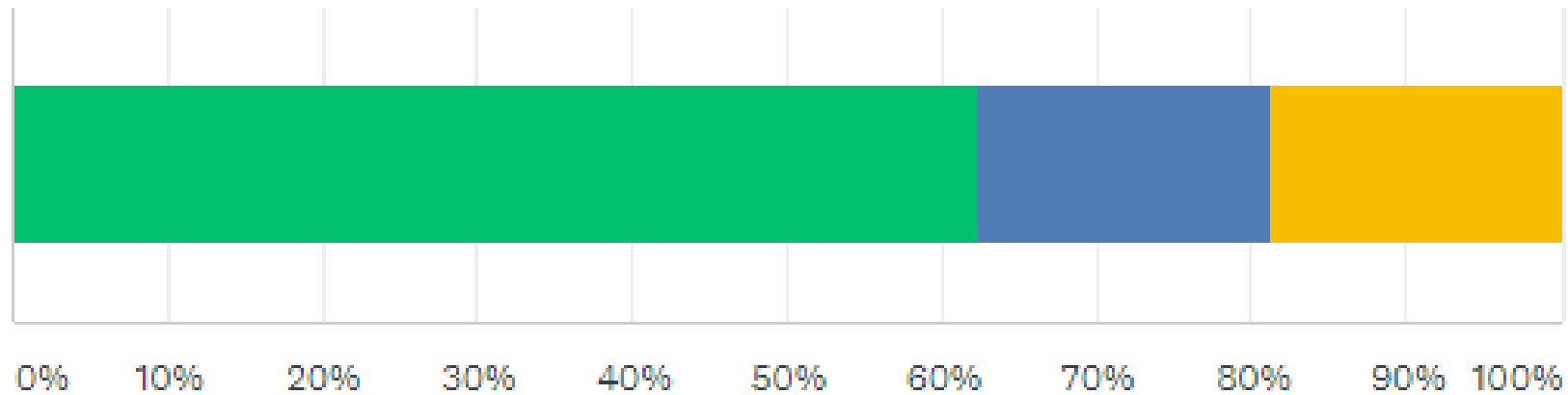
If highway toll revenue is subject to the constitutional restriction, tolling could still potentially increase equitable mobility



- Strongly agree: Could create significant benefits, even if revenue is restricted to capite
- Somewhat agree: Could still be benefits, but not as much as without restrictions
- Somewhat disagree: Will not advance equ. mob. unless rev. can go beyond cap. improv
- Strongly disagree: Negatives outweigh the benefits, regardless of revenue restrictions
- Don't know/not sure

What we heard last time: Tolling and equitable mobility

Highway tolling should be used in our region to manage our existing highway system as efficiently as possible before we expand our highways.



- Strongly agree - tolling for demand management should be implemented before expansion
- Somewhat agree - tolling should be evaluated, but implementation should be dependent on other factors
- Somewhat disagree - both tolling and expansion should be evaluated and may be necessary
- Strongly disagree - highway expansion paid by fuel taxes is a better way to accommodate growth
- Don't know/not sure

What we heard last time: Tolling and equitable mobility

Further comments:

- What are we comparing when we ask these questions: today or to the future? And potentially a future with more driving, more congestion, more carbon emissions.
- Skepticism that tolling could ever minimize burden on low-income or BIPOC Portlanders
 - Past decision-making has led to harmful outcomes and distrust of government
- Concern about false narrative of “right to pollute” → is our goal to create a future where everyone can drive less and pollute less, regardless of demographics? Due to existing inequities, is the answer different for short and long term?
- Acknowledgement of our car-centric society and that many people will still need to use them. Opportunity to reimagine how we use and access automobiles (more car share, carpooling, etc.)

Further information on points raised

The status quo in our transportation system is inequitable and unsustainable.

Inequities in mobility access, options

- A greater proportion of BIPOC Portlanders (17%) ride public transit than white Portlanders (11%). Since 2000, bus speeds have decreased by 14%.
- 31% of Black households don't have access to a car, compared to 14% of white households
- BIPOC Portlanders have access to 27% fewer jobs and services within a 45-minute transit ride

Inequities in climate & health outcomes

- Transportation GHG emissions are up 8% since 1990, and climate impacts disproportionately burden BIPOC and low-income Portlanders
- More diverse Portland neighborhoods (>15% BIPOC) experience 2-3 times higher rates of diesel pollution

Inequities in safety

- People walking in East Portland are 2.5 times more likely to be killed in traffic crashes
- In 2019 traffic stops, police searched Black people at more than twice the rate of white motorists and pedestrians

Inequities in economic opportunity

- Women are underrepresented in transportation sector jobs
- BIPOC Portlanders are underrepresented in freight jobs, which are relatively higher paying for those with only High School education.
- Commute time is a critical factor in the ability to escape poverty. Average commute times are 20% longer for Black Portlanders than for white Portlanders.

Further information on points raised

Current projections show VMT and associated challenges will continue rising.

- 500,000 more people expected to live in our region by 2040
- 2040 Regional Transportation Plan includes over \$15B of capital investment and ~\$30B in operations and maintenance investment
 - Includes \$5B for transit expansion
- Models suggest this won't be enough to meet our goals
 - **2040 Per Person VMT goal:** 10% reduction; **modeled projection:** 4% reduction
 - **2040 Mode share goal:** 45% of trips by transit, biking and walking (3x baseline); **projection:** 19% of trips by transit, biking and walking
- **Bottom line:** Significant investments in transit and other planned multimodal projects won't reduce driving miles enough to have associated climate emissions reductions, mobility, equity and safety benefits.



Further information on points raised

- PBOT is using a modeling tool called **VisionEval** to explore what strategies are needed to reach our greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Key insights gained to date:
 - Emissions reductions are greater when complimentary strategies are pursued in tandem (“carrots” and “sticks”)
 - The City can’t do it alone, Portland-based strategies need to be combined with strong regional and state strategies

Bottom line: There is no single “silver bullet” solution to achieving our GHG and vehicle trip reduction goals and making progress on increasing the equity of our system



Emerging themes: Tolling and equitable mobility

- Tolling has the potential to improve equitable mobility over the status quo, particularly compared to a "do nothing scenario," which will likely lead to either increased congestion or highway expansion, each of which have associated costs.
- There are still doubts that tolling *can* be implemented equitably. Transportation investments and decisions to date have burdened Black, Indigenous, People of Color, low-income Portlanders and persons with disabilities. If tolling proceeds, an explicit commitment to minimizing burdens on these groups and local stakeholder oversight are essential.

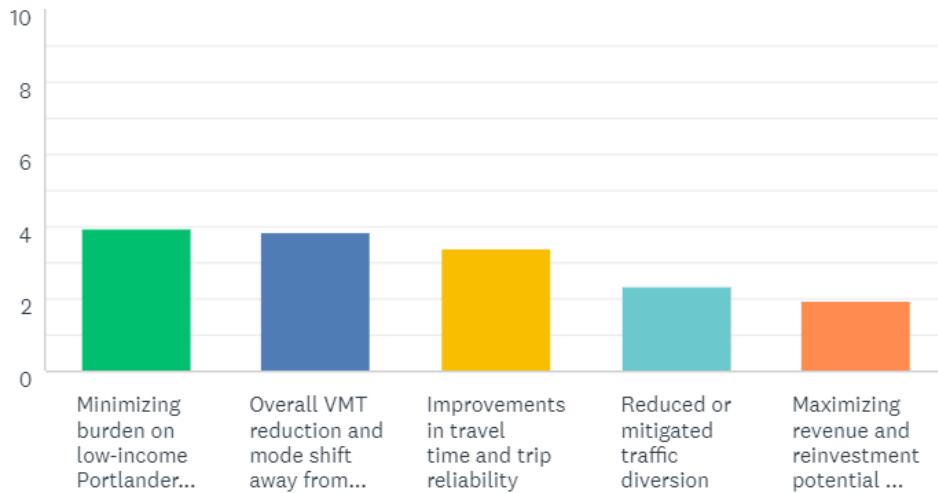
Topic 2: Tolling system design and priority outcomes



What we heard last time: Tolling system design and priority outcomes

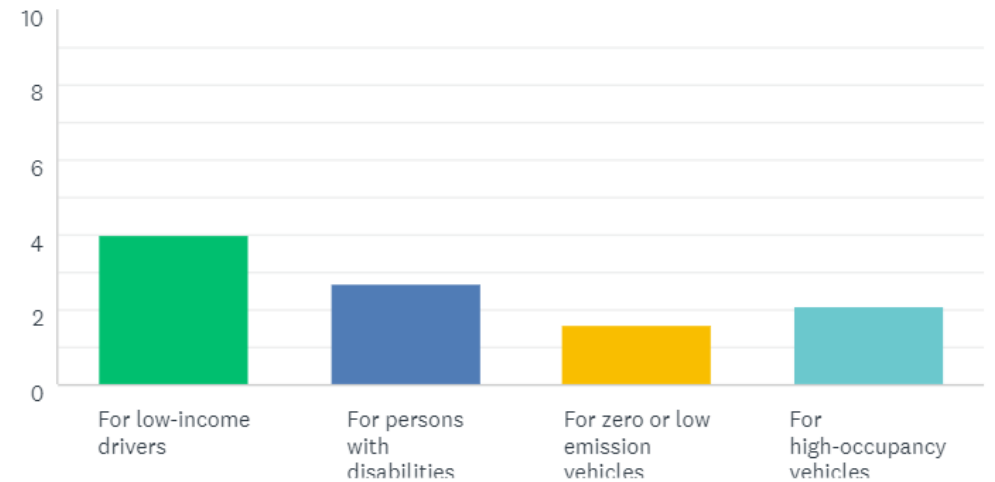
What factors or potential outcomes should the City of Portland prioritize when it shows up in regional tolling conversations?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



When designing toll programs for our region, which type of discounts, exemptions or rebates should the City of Portland advocate for?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 1



What we heard last time: Tolling system design and priority outcomes

Further comments:

- Reducing GHG is an important outcome and should be called out as a design consideration
- Some skepticism that tolling could ever be designed to minimize burden on low-income or BIPOC Portlanders
 - Past decision-making has led to harmful outcomes and distrust of government
- Revenue can be key to making tolling equitable, but should it be the main goal?
- Calls to be bold in terms of exemptions or rebates to eliminate pain points – balanced with importance or not weakening system impact
- Importance of not conflating race and income

Further information on points raised

Meeting our climate goals will require a significant decrease in vehicle-miles-travelled (VMT) AND rapid decarbonization of the remaining VMT on the road.

- Fuel shifting = both changing vehicle types and making fuels cleaner
- VisionEval showing that combining fuel shift with incentives, pricing and more mixed use and compact land use results in significantly greater emission reductions.
- [Recent analysis](#) by Climate Solutions also found that *“reducing VMT and electrifying transportation has many benefits and is the optimal scenario for overall broad social benefit”* (such as improved health outcomes and lower cost), while achieving greater emission reductions.



Further information on points raised

The more dynamic and means-based the tolling program design, the less regressive it will be.

- TransForm's "[Pricing Roads, Advancing Equity](#)" report explains the connection between dynamic pricing, means-based discounts/exemptions/rebates and equity impacts.

PRICING STRATEGY EQUITY MATRIX	
PRICING STRATEGY	EQUITY IMPACTS
24 hour Flat-rate pricing	Likely to be most regressive strategy, charging low-income drivers who often don't commute at peak commute hours. Least efficient at reducing congestion. Used on many tolled facilities.
Dynamic pricing varies with time or congestion	Efficient charging system but may be regressive (though likely less regressive than gas and sales taxes).
Dynamic pricing with some means-based discounts or rebates	Less regressive due to discounts.
Means-based pricing with targeted caps and/or exemptions	System designed specifically not to be regressive. Some loss of efficiency as plentiful discounts, caps and exemptions may limit the congestion and climate benefits.

Emerging themes: Tolling system design and priority outcomes

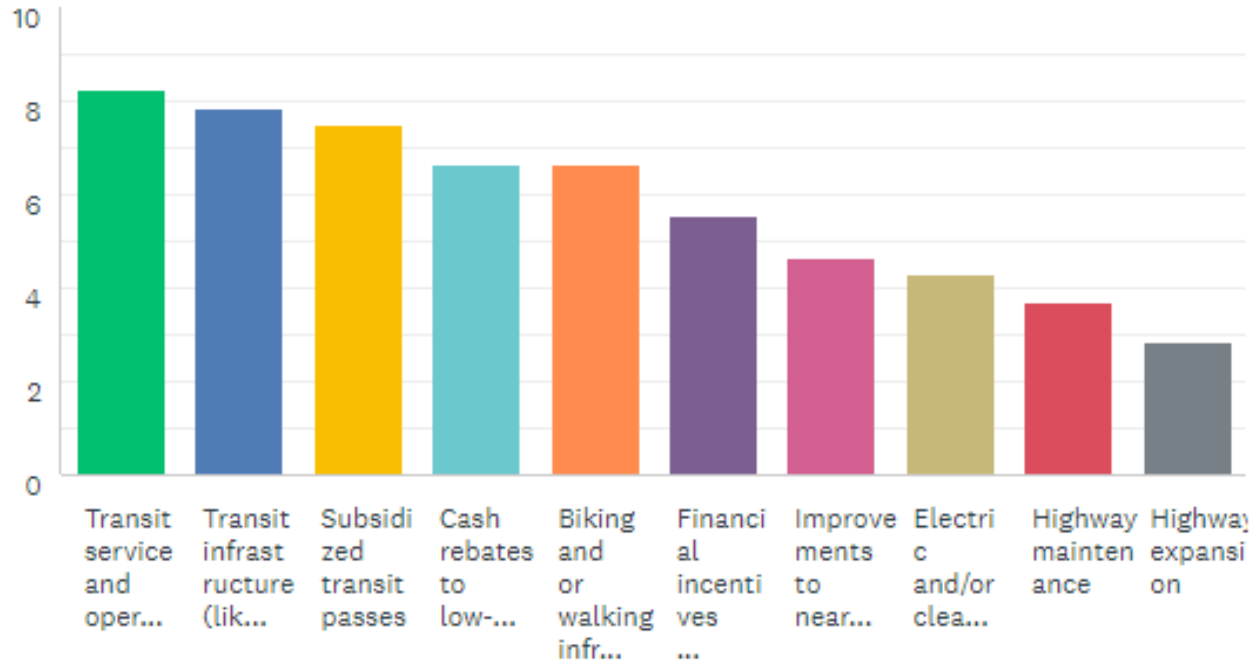
- Tolling programs should be explicitly designed to prioritize climate and equity outcomes. Prices should be set to effectively reduce combustion engine and single-passenger vehicle miles travelled, while impacts on low-income community members should be minimized through variable rates and discounts/rebates/exemptions.
- For tolling to advance equitable mobility, safeguards must be built in to avoid discrimination and/or disproportionate burdens of payment technology or enforcement systems. More research is needed to identify models for this.

Topic 3: Tolling revenue and complementary strategies

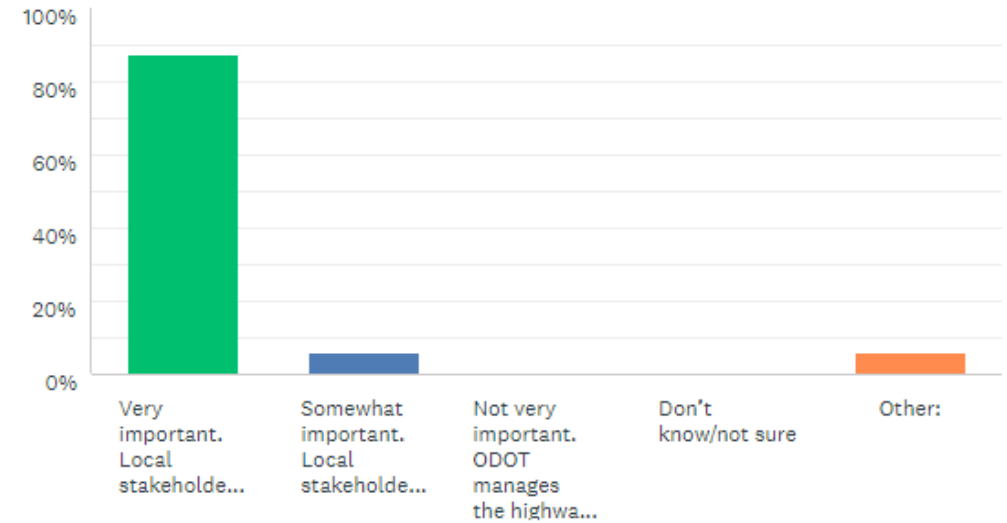


What we heard last time: Tolling revenue & complementary strategies

When considering highway toll projects, what complementary strategies/services are important to evaluate and/or what areas are most important for potential investment of toll revenue to create an equitable system?



How important is local involvement in toll revenue decisions?



What we heard last time: Tolling revenue & complementary strategies

Further comments:

- Desire for more info to know which investments/complementary strategies will improve outcomes for BIPOC Portlanders the most
- Importance of housing/transportation nexus & looking at complementary investments in affordable housing & anti-displacement
- Opportunity through this to address issues on orphan highways
- Local involvement in revenues is a big issue



Further information on points raised

More work is needed to understand community mobility needs and priorities, but recent research suggests making non-driving modes more accessible, efficient and affordable would benefit low-income and BIPOC Portlanders

- Most Metro area residents still rely on driving for many activities, but 48% are interested in using a non-driving option more ([2017 Travel & Awareness Survey](#))
- Non-driving options particularly play an important role in the lives of youth and lower-income residents ([2017 Travel & Awareness Survey](#))
- “Causing less pollution,” “reducing stress” and “saving money” are compelling reasons to drive less ([2017 Travel & Awareness Survey](#))
- Many BIPOC residents already use non-driving travel options, and say they want greater ability to predictably plan and count on reliable, safe and comfortable trips ([Regional Travel Options Communities of Color Research Report](#))

We are hoping to gather more information on these topics through surveys and/or focus groups in the coming months.



Further information on points raised

PBOT worked with firm Fehr and Peers to assess the relative effectiveness of different strategies on reducing VMT

Generally, the research showed the following non-pricing strategies had highest VMT reduction potential:

- **Incentives** – employer subsidized transit and free or subsidized passes for older adults and youth.
- **Transportation Demand Management requirements** - employer cash-out, commute trip reduction programs
- **Combining strategies** – pricing, incentives, requirements and information work well together to incentivize and disincentive behaviors (i.e. Transportation Wallet with priced parking and package of incentives)

This is largely consistent with the VisionEval findings



Emerging themes: Tolling revenue and complementary strategies

- The use of toll revenue is very important. If revenue use is restricted, tolling is less likely to positively impact equitable mobility. If driving is more expensive, robust alternatives to driving alone must be available. Revenue should be available to support these alternatives. Transit is one of the most critical potential investment areas.
- Tolling is not a stand-alone solution. Our region must continue make non-driving options more accessible and attractive, while also improving car access for low-income people when non-driving options are not realistic. This includes investments in transit, biking and walking infrastructure; expanded mobility incentives; land use planning policies to create more complete neighborhoods; preservation and development of affordable housing near centers and corridors; and support for transitioning to electric and low-carbon fuel powered vehicles.

Poll:
Do these themes
capture the Task
Force sentiments
to date?





Outstanding
questions relevant to
tolling



- ❑ How effective would tolling actually be in Portland, and at what price point?
- ❑ Which of these themes apply across pricing typologies, and where are they different? How could strategies across multiple typologies potentially work together to advance equitable mobility?
- ❑ Who (demographically) currently drives and parks where in Portland?
- ❑ What implications will the Covid-19 pandemic have long-term on travel patterns?
- ❑ How does pricing impact the transportation/housing nexus? What land use considerations should be involved when evaluating future tolling projects?
- ❑ What complementary strategies are highest priority for BIPOC communities? What are most effective/impactful at advancing equitable mobility?

Any other questions we've missed?



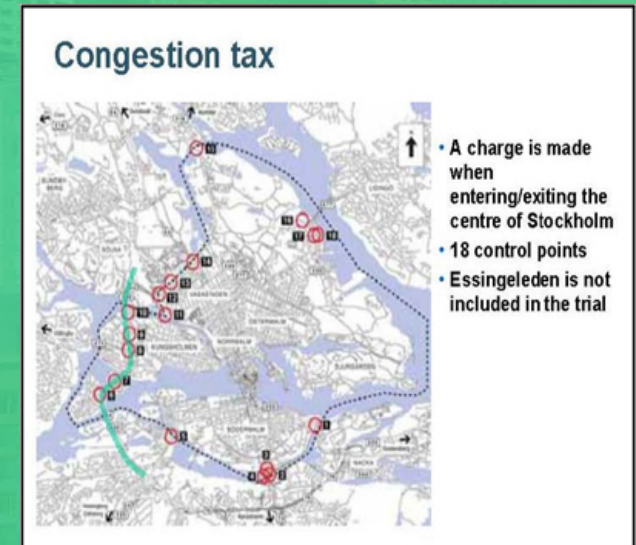


Looking ahead:
Cordons and Road
Usage Charges

Cordons and area pricing

What is it?

- Variable or fixed charge to drive within or into a specific area, often a downtown
- Some systems charge just for crossing the boundary; others charge people for driving within the zone, even if the driver does not cross the boundary
- Many schemes provide discounts or exemptions for certain types of trips (low-emission vehicles, multi-passenger vehicles, etc.)



Cordons and area pricing, ctd.

Outcomes in other cities:

Stockholm (rate varies based on time of day):

- 22% reduction in vehicle trips
- 14% reduction in CO2
- 33% reduction in delays
- \$150M in annual revenue
- Alternative fuel vehicle exemption has increased sales of such vehicles

London (flat daily rate, charged between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays):

- 30% reduction in vehicle trips
- 17% reduction in CO2
- 30% reduction in delays
- \$230 in annual revenue
- Cycling up 66% since introduction; bus ridership up 28% (as of 2007)
- Ultra Low Emission Zone within Congestion Zone incentivizes low-emission vehicles; has dramatically improved air quality

Considerations:

- **Transit importance:** London added 300 more buses and increased bus frequency at same time as congestion zone
- **Tough to pass:** In all places, opposition was high prior to implementation but decreased once in place
- **Exemptions important, but can dampen effect:** In London, taxis, private for hire, people living in the zone and persons with disabilities are exempt or pay lower rates. Has reduced impact/revenue.

Road usage charges

What is it?

- Also called “VMT pricing” or “pay as you drive”
- Involves using technology in vehicles to track miles traveled, charging the driver a fee based on use
- Imagined to eventually replace the gas tax
- Ties costs of driving more directly to use.
 - Sends a price signal directly based on how much someone drives; can incentivize reduced driving
- Could be designed to fluctuate based on demand/fuel type/occupancy, etc. or to be a flat fee



OReGO



ROAD USAGE CHARGE

Road usage charges

OReGO: Current status

- Launched in 2015, first in the nation pay per mile pilot program
- Road User Charge Task Force is charged with finding new ways to fund the state's transportation system (fuel tax diminishing)
- ODOT about to launch a new pilot to explore possibility of multiple overlapping rates
- In 2021, expect legislature to consider moving to a more wide-spread program in the future (2027)



What's coming up?

Next meeting: January 11, 2021

Meeting focus: Cordons, area pricing and road-usage charges

We want your feedback! Please complete our short, 60 second meeting evaluation:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PLK33PP>

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city street intersection, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The scene shows several pedestrians walking across a crosswalk, and several cyclists riding through the intersection. The street has white markings for a crosswalk and a 'BUS LANE' with an arrow pointing right. A traffic light pole is visible on the right side of the frame. The overall mood is busy and urban.

Thank you!

