CLACKAMAS COUNTY

DAN JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BUILDING
150 BEAVERCREEK ROAD OREGON CITY, OR 97045

MEMORANDUM

TO: Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

FROM: Dan Johnson, Director

RE: Regional Mobility Pricing Project – Purpose and Need & Proposed Action Comment Letter

DATE: January 4, 2023

REQUEST: Staff requests that the Board submit a letter of comment related to the Purpose and Need & the Proposed Action during the official comment period for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP).

BACKGROUND: The scoping period for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) Environmental Assessment (EA) is now open. The RMPP is an ODOT led project to implement congestion pricing (tolling) as a tool to reduce congestion on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan region. Congestion pricing, using variable-rate tolls, is central to ODOT's urban mobility strategy to reduce traffic jams and improve safety

The purpose of the EA is to identify the project's potential benefits and impacts. Since the County is identified as a Participating Agency the county has the direct opportunity to be engaged at all steps of the process.

The RMPP EA public scoping period will run from November 18, 2022 to January 6, 2023. During this 50-day window, agencies and the public is being asked for input on the below items:

- **Draft Purpose and Need Statement** (Attachment B): includes draft project goals and objectives
- **Draft Description of the Proposed Action** (Attachment C): describes how congestion pricing would work on I-5 and I-205

FHWA and ODOT are especially interested in feedback on the project scope, relevant issues, and potential impacts. All comments need to be submitted by January 6, 2023.

Staff has provided a draft comment letter for your review (Attachment A). Included in the letter is a request that the RMPP EA be changed to a full Environmental Impact Statement which includes all of the tolling projects. By including the I-205 Tolling project and the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) tolling as phases of the overall RMPP, the impacts of all of the tolling projects would be considered together to insure that none of the impacts are minimized.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Draft RMPP Purpose and Need / Proposed Action Comment Letter

Attachment B: Purpose and Need for Proposed Action – Regional Mobility Pricing Project

Attachment C: Proposed Action for NEPA Analysis - Regional Mobility Pricing Project

ATTACHMENT A

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC SERVICES BUILDING
2051 KAEN ROAD | OREGON CITY, OR 97045

December, 2022

Oregon Department of Transportation
355 Capitol Street NE, MS 11
Salem, OR 97301-3871

RE: Regional Mobility Pricing Project – Purpose and Need and Proposed Action for NEPA Analysis Comments

Dear:

On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, we respectfully submit our comments on the identified Purpose and Need of ODOT's Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) and the Proposed Action for NEPA Analysis

Before doing so, the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners would like to be clear that this letter is not an endorsement or acceptance of any proposal to implement congestion pricing along I-205 and I-5.

First, we have strong concerns that the implementation of the RMPP will exacerbate the issues of rerouting onto local roads, worsening conditions for people traveling by car, transit, bicycling or walking.

If the purpose of the project is to reduce congestion, it should reduce congestion on all roads. The Purpose and Need should be amended to include:

1. A new section that directly speaks to the current impact of diversion on to local roads and the future diversion that will be created by the RMMP project. To have a fair and balanced review, we believe that those impacts must be identified, quantified and reported. This will also support the goals that already address the issue.
2. There needs to be a stronger statement about the needs to improve safety on all roads, not just on the interstate system. An additional bullet under the **Goal: Support safe travel regardless of the transportation mode** should added that states:
    - Monitor and make investments where needed to improve safety throughout the area of impact.

Second, the design of the toll collection system, either mainline tolling or tolling of the ramps, will influence the level of diversion. This needs to be clearly studied and inform the design of the tolling system.

In the Proposed Action, under the section "All electronic tolling with gantries and transponders" there should be a description of the need to study if the gantries should be along the mainline or if they should be on the off-ramps, and which option creates less re-routing onto the local systems. In addition, there needs to be information on how the location of the gantries will be identified.

Third, it should be clearly expressed that revenue generated from congestion pricing will be spent both on and off the ODOT system.

Since Congestion Pricing is designed to encourage people to use other facilities or modes of travel by pricing the interstate, the revenue from Congestion Pricing should be used on these other facilities and modes. Places within the documents that should be updated include:

1. Adding "both on and off the ODOT system" to the purpose statement so that it reads:

   The purpose of the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) is to use congestion pricing on Interstate-5 (I-5) and Interstate-205 (I-205) to manage traffic congestion on these facilities in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area in a manner that will generate revenue for transportation system investments both on and off the ODOT system.

2. To add clarity, additional bullets needs to be added under the **Goal: Limit additional traffic diversion from congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 to affected roads and neighborhoods** that state:

   - Prioritize investments needed to address transportation systems impacted by diversion
   - Collaborate with local agencies and business owners to identify and mitigate the economic impacts of diversion to businesses

3. Under the Goal: **Create a sustainable revenue stream to fund maintenance, improvements and modernization of existing infrastructure, as well as other transportation system investments** it should be clear that it is creating a sustainable revenue stream for all owners of the various transportation systems impacted by the implementation of congestion pricing. The last bullet under this Goal should be amended as below:

   - Generate sufficient revenue such that net revenues after toll program are available to support transportation system investments both on and off the ODOT system.

Fourth, to achieve improvement to air quality and reductions to GHG emissions, the project should show a reduction of per capita vehicle miles traveled and hours traveled both on and off the interstate system.

A variety of changes should be made to the Goals to better support the reduction of GHG emissions, both on and off the interstate system.

1. There should an amendment (see underlined insertion) to bullet under the **Goal: Contribute to regional improvements in air quality and reductions in GHG emissions that contribute to climate change effects.**
    - Reduce the per capita amount of motor vehicle miles travels and motor vehicle hours traveled, <u>both on the interstate and local systems</u>, to contribute to regional improvements to air quality and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Add an additional bullet under the **Goal: Support multimodal transportation choices to provide travel options and manage congestion** which clearly indicates the need to provide funding to support operations of others modes of transportation, including transit
    - Fund other modes of transportation in order to achieve the desired usage of transit and other modes.

<u>Fifth,</u> it is essential to review the impacts of all of the tolling projects comprehensively.

A full Environmental Impact Statement which includes all of the tolling projects should be completed, not just an Environmental Assessment. The I-205 Tolling project and the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) tolling should be considered phases of the overall Regional Mobility Pricing Project. This will allow the impacts of all of the tolling projects to be considered together, and insure that none of the impacts are minimized. It should include an analysis of the impacts of how implementation of the various phases (IBR, I-205, and remainder of RMPP) affect the surrounding areas and inform when the collection of revenues should begin for each phase so that there is the least impact on the surrounding communities and transportation systems.

<u>Finally</u>, residents, workers and businesses of Clackamas County should not be forced to bear the burden of tolling or congestion pricing, with all of the potential associated impacts, before a system wide approach is applied.

Presently, there are fewer transportation options available, more of our workers travel outside of the county for work requiring them to travel longer distances, and established businesses near the corridor will see increased costs if they choose to use the freeway. We continue to be concerned that the current traffic congestion on the freeways will be shifted onto the local roads, and that due to a lack of other available realistic travel choices there will be an undue burden on people who live and work in Clackamas County. To clearly understand the overall impacts to Clackamas County, we request the NEPA analysis include summaries of the data on how each county is impacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the Purpose and Need Statement and the Proposed Action. We look forward to your response as part of the NEPA process.

Sincerely,

Urban Mobility STRATEGY

Regional Mobility Pricing Project

Purpose

The purpose of the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) is to use congestion pricing on Interstate-5 (I-5) and Interstate-205 (I-205) to manage traffic congestion on these facilities in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area in a manner that will generate revenue for transportation system investments.

Need for the Proposed Action

Daily traffic congestion is negatively affecting the quality of life in the growing Portland region.

In the Portland metropolitan area[1], people use I-5 and I-205 to get to work and school, shop, recreate, and congregate. Traffic congestion creates long backups of vehicles traveling at slow speeds—a scenario that many people experience daily while traveling during the morning and evening rush hours. Interstate 5 has the most bottlenecks (10) of any highway in the Portland region which illustrates the severe congestion along I-5, particularly in the northbound direction where multiple bottlenecks overlap. The most significant northbound bottleneck locations on I-5 occur at the Interstate Bridge to Capital Highway (12.2 mile bottleneck length, 8.75 hours of daily congestion), I-405 diverge to I-84 merge (1.3 miles, 8.0 hours), and Marquam Bridge to Hood Ave (1.1 miles, 8.0 hours), and the most significant southbound bottleneck locations on I-5 occur at Killingsworth to Interstate Bridge (3.0 miles, 6.5 hours) and I-84 to Rosa Parks (3.3 miles, 12.5 hours) (ODOT 2021a).

What is a toll?

A toll is a fee imposed to drive on a road or bridge. Bridge tolls and roadway tolls have been used for centuries to pay for construction and maintenance of the facility. Historically, travelers had to stop and pay in cash, but that is no longer necessary with modern technology (FHWA, n.d.)

Is congestion pricing the same thing?

The term congestion pricing describes a type of tolling where drivers are charged a higher price during peak traffic periods. The higher fee encourages some drivers to consider using other travel options such as carpools or transit, or change their travel time to other, less congested times of the day, or not make the trip at all. If a small percentage of drivers choose another mode of travel or time of travel, it could reduce traffic congestion for those who can't modify their trip and improve traffic flow for the entire system. The benefits of congestion pricing are well documented, based on the experiences of multiple toll and express lane projects in operation across the country (FHWA 2017).

There are six primary bottlenecks on I-205, three in each direction. The NB Bottleneck Locations on I-205 occur at the Glenn Jackson Bridge to Sunnyside (11.3 miles, 7.0 hours), Division/Powell to Sunnyside (5.00 miles, 33.75 hours), and Abernethy Bridge to I-5 (8.3 miles, 4.25 hours), and the SB bottleneck locations are at Powell to Airport Way (5.6 miles, 4.0 hours), 82nd Ave to Sunnyside (3.1 miles, 3.0 hours), and 10th St to 82nd Ave (4.4 miles, 3.5 hours) (ODOT 2021a).

Congested conditions on I-5 and I-205 result in traffic rerouting to other highways in the region (I-405, US 26, etc.), local streets, and arterial streets. This rerouting results in additional traffic congestion and creates potential safety conflicts. Crash frequency on both freeways and arterials tends to increase with

[1] Portland metropolitan area refers to the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metropolitan Statistical Area.

the congestion levels and stop-and-go traffic. The conditions caused by traffic congestion make travel unreliable such that drivers and transit riders cannot predict how long it will take them to get to work, home, services, or childcare arrangements.

Forecasts for the region show that population and employment will continue to steadily grow. The Portland metropolitan area population is expected to grow from approximately 2.5 million residents in 2018 to more than 3 million by 2040 (23%) and more than 3.5 million by 2060 (43%) (Census Reporter 2018; Metro 2016). Since 2011, job growth in Portland has outpaced the nation year over year: In 2019, Portland grew at an average annual rate of 2% compared to the U.S. average of 1.6% (Portland Business Alliance 2020). By 2039, the number of vehicles travelling along Interstate 5 per average weekday in the Portland region is projected to be between 127,200 and 192,900, depending on the freeway segment (ODOT 2020), which is an approximate increase of 18% from 2017 traffic counts. Planned roadway projects, improvements in transit, and increased use of active transportation modes (bicycles, walking, etc.) will not fully address the increase in daily trips and increased hours of traffic congestion (Metro 2018a).

COVID-19 Pandemic Traffic

Traffic volumes decreased significantly during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, and rush-hour traffic congestion has not been as severe as it was before the pandemic. With the economy reopening, vehicle numbers are increasing. As of July 2021, the Portland metropolitan area state-highway volumes are only 3% to 5% below pre-pandemic levels for weekday traffic and 4% to 7% below weekend traffic. ODOT expects that traffic levels will continue to return to pre-pandemic levels and grow in the future (ODOT 2021b).

Traffic congestion adversely affects the Portland metropolitan area economy.

Oregon's economy depends on a functional transportation system in the Portland metropolitan area to efficiently move people, goods and service providers. Oregon is a trade-dependent state, relying heavily on exports from our farms, forests and factories to create jobs. Freight moves to and from the Portland metropolitan area and across the state of Oregon primarily by commercial trucking. I-5 is a vital north-south interstate, connecting the markets and industries of the entire west coast of North America. In order to be competitive in global markets, the transportation system must efficiently move people, goods and services. Thus, the highway transportation system is critical to the economic strength of the Portland metropolitan area and Oregon businesses and households (ODOT 2017).

Traffic congestion affects the Portland metropolitan area economy through slow and unpredictable travel times for freight services, small businesses, employers, employees, and all highway users. Unreliable travel times can cause late fees for truck deliveries, missed opportunities for additional deliveries, and reduce the number of work sites a service provider can access in a day. From 2015 to 2017, drivers in the Portland region experienced an 18.5% increase in the number of hours of traffic congestion. In 2015, the daily cost of traffic congestion in the Portland metropolitan area was $1.7 million, which increased to $2.0 million in 2017 (ODOT 2018).

Of the interstate freight routes in the Portland region, I-5 carries the highest freight volume, ranging from 10,000 to 19,000 trucks per day, while I-205 carries the second-highest freight volume, ranging from 7,800 to 14,000 trucks per day (ODOT 2018). Additionally, according to the American Transport Research Institute, three of the top 100 freight bottlenecks in the nation are within the Portland metropolitan area, including #28 – I-5 at I-84 (Rose Quarter), #33 – I-5 Interstate Bridge and #83 – I-5 at I-205 (South).

State and federal transportation revenue sources are increasingly insufficient to fund transportation infrastructure needs.

ODOT's transportation funding originates from a mix of state (approximately 77%) and federal (approximately 23%) sources (ODOT 2022). The State Highway Fund relies on a three-pronged approach: the gas tax, weight-mile tax, and driver and motor vehicle fees, and the Federal Highway Trust Fund is funded primarily by federal fuel taxes. These sources have not kept pace with the costs of maintaining Oregon's transportation system or constructing new transportation projects. These state and federal funds have not been adjusted to reflect increasing construction costs, rising inflation, a more fuel-efficient State of Oregon vehicle fleet, and growing transportation infrastructure demand. Especially on the state level, escalating expenditures to maintain aging infrastructure, perform seismic upgrades for state bridges, and complete needed construction have increased financial needs. Simultaneously, despite recent federal investments in transportation infrastructure including, e.g., the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, federal funding has not kept pace with rising transportation costs over the last several decades (Congressional Budget Office 2020). For example, the federal gas tax has not been adjusted since 1993, and federal funds have been supplemented by increasing state-based contributions including from sources outside of state fuel taxes (Oregon Legislative Revenue Office 2022).

Compounding the need for additional transportation revenue is Oregon's substantial increase in travel demand as the state experiences population and employment growth, particularly in the Portland metropolitan area. Thus, additional means to generate revenue are required in order to meet the Portland metropolitan area and greater Oregon transportation needs. ODOT must explore every possible method for maximizing use of its existing infrastructure while developing new, recurring funding sources for future transportation investments. In its plans and policies, ODOT has consistently identified tolling and congestion pricing as important tools to generate needed revenue.

Our regional transportation system must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by managing congestion.

Climate change is a significant threat to Oregon's economy, environment, and way of life (Gov. Kate Brown 2019). To address climate change and its negative impacts such as extreme temperatures and flooding, Oregon has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 45% below 1990 levels by the year 2035, and by 80% by 2050 (EO 20-04 2020). The transportation sector creates approximately 36% of greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon (Oregon Global Warming Commission 2020). Traffic congestion leads to an increase in fuel consumption and carbon dioxide emissions. During congestion, vehicles spend more time on the road, idling or crawling, and undergoing numerous acceleration and deceleration events that leads to an increase in emissions.

To help meet the state's goals for greenhouse gas reduction, total vehicle emissions in the Portland metropolitan area must be reduced by decreasing the number of hours vehicles spend stuck in traffic, the amount of stop-and-go traffic, and the vehicle miles traveled by motor vehicles. Vehicle electrification and the use of non-carbon propulsion can greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Current air emissions

models already account for a transition of the vehicle fleet to low- and non-carbon energy over time.[2] Even with this transition, greater reductions are needed to meet the state's goals.

A lack of comprehensive multimodal travel options in the Portland metropolitan region contributes to congestion and limits mobility.

Multimodal travel accommodates a wide range of travel methods including walking, bicycling, driving, and public transportation. Multimodal travel can increase transportation system efficiency and accommodate more trips in the same amount of space, thereby reducing roadway congestion. When effectively integrated, multimodal travel can help advance various environmental, health, and congestion-mitigating benefits for communities, such as creating a more equitable system, reducing crash frequency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Multimodal travel results in a reduction of vehicle emissions, which in turn improves air quality and reduces greenhouse gas emissions (USDOT 2015). Multimodal travel provides additional access to populations who do not drive, such as youth, seniors, people with disabilities, low-income residents, and those who do not own a car (Litman 2021).

Transit service in the Portland metropolitan area is not evenly or widely distributed, and it is not possible for many people to use transit as an alternative to automobile travel (Metro 2018a). In many places in the region, gaps exist in sidewalks, bike lanes and regular, frequent transit service is not available (Metro 2018a). Additionally, land use patterns result in transit service and active transportation facilities that are often very distant from residential areas and job centers, preventing safe or convenient access to these facilities. Finally, transit and active transportation service and facilities are often not available late at night, when many people travel, especially shift workers. Therefore, despite the benefits of transit and active transportation, alternatives to personal vehicle use are not presently a viable option for all road users in the region, and regional coordination is needed to plan, fund, and implement multimodal travel options.

The Portland metropolitan area's transportation networks have resulted in inequitable outcomes for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities.

Many urban interstate highways and major civic centers were deliberately built through neighborhoods with concentrations of people experiencing low incomes and communities of color, often requiring the destruction of housing and other local institutions (Federal Register 2021). In the eastern Portland metropolitan area, the construction of I-205 exemplifies these outcomes where the planned highway alignment was changed due to political motivation and public protest (Fackler 2009). The alignment was moved away from Lake Oswego, farther east and south into Clackamas County and farther east in Portland, away from majority white and wealthier cities, reinforcing social and economic inequity (Invisible Walls 2019). In Central Portland during the 1950s and 1960s, the construction of I-5, the Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Emanuel Legacy Hospital, the Portland Public School Blanchard site, and urban renewal programs divided and displaced communities in North and Northeast Portland, affecting and burdening communities of color – especially Black communities – in the historic Albina neighborhood (Gibson 2007).

[2] The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency MOVES model estimates emissions for mobile sources at the national, county, and project level for criteria air pollutants, greenhouse gases, and air toxics, and can be used to model the impacts of changing fractions of fully electronic passenger cars, passenger trucks, and light commercial trucks (EPA 2021b).

Because of these discriminatory transportation policies and politics, a geographic mismatch exists between job locations, essential resources, community services, and housing that is affordable (Oregonian 2012). This disproportionality affects communities of color, immigrant communities, people experiencing low income, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming, and queer (LGBTQ+) individuals, and people living with a disability (Federal Register 2021). Members of these communities have fewer transportation options and travel farther between destinations, which increases transportation costs and dependence on unreliable travel options and adds more time in traffic congestion. Between 2002 and 2012, the number of jobs accessible within a typical commute (7.1 miles for the Portland Metro service area) held steady for white households but fell 12 percent for African Americans, 3 percent for Latin American households, and 4 percent for low-income households (Metro 2018b).

Collectively, these transportation and land use decisions, and the systems that led to them, have resulted in discrimination and unequal investment in these communities. This leads to lasting trauma and continued economic, social, and health impacts for historically and currently excluded and underserved individuals and communities (Federal Register 2021).

ODOT's Commitment to Equity

ODOT acknowledges that past land use and transportation investments have resulted in negative cultural, health, economic, and relational impacts to local communities and populations and that these investments have disproportionately affected historically and currently excluded and underserved communities. ODOT recognizes that these communities have historically been left out of transportation planning and the decision-making process.

ODOT is committed to serving all Oregonians equitably. To meet this commitment to equity, the Oregon Toll Program convened an Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) made up of equity and mobility experts and advocates who meet regularly and provide input on how tolling on the freeway system can include benefits for populations that have been historically excluded or underserved by transportation planning projects. Together with the EMAC, the Oregon Toll Program developed an Equity Framework to identify the burdens and benefits of tolling and provide a process for determining how to equitably distribute the burdens and benefits from the toll projects. ODOT will engage communities who use or live near the Project area, especially those who have been historically and are currently excluded and underserved, to participate throughout the development of a project concept, decision-making, and continuing through Project implementation and monitoring.

For communities located near transportation-related activities, there is a greater risk of concentrated air pollutants and heat islands. Communities located near major roads can experience increased air pollution from cars, trucks, and other motor vehicles, and can have an increased incident and severity of health problems associated with air pollution exposures (EPA 2014). Higher amounts of traffic, congestion, stop-and-go movement, or high-speed operations can increase the emissions of certain pollutants (EPA 2014). Areas with large areas of pavement for transportation uses such as parking areas and roadways can create heat island areas, areas with ground temperatures substantially higher than surrounding areas with less pavement (EPA n.d). Minority communities and individuals experiencing low-income are often in close proximity to high traffic roads and transportation land uses and therefore at an increased risk of exposure to ambient air pollution, heat island areas, and their related health effects (EPA 2021a).

Goals and Objectives

Project goals and objectives are desirable outcomes of the Project including and beyond the Purpose and Need Statement. The following goals and objectives reflect input collected during the Project's Summer-Fall 2021 engagement and from the Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis Policy Advisory Committee, partner agencies, the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee, and other Project stakeholders; these goals and objectives will be considered in comparing a congestion pricing Proposed Action against the future No Action (no congestion pricing) alternative. Many of these goals and objectives relate to more than one of the need statements provided above. These goals are not listed by order of priority but are generally grouped by the need statements above.

- **Goal: Support management of congestion and travel demand.**
  - Design the congestion pricing system to improve efficient use of roadway infrastructure and improve travel reliability.
  - Design the congestion pricing system to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled to use existing and planned infrastructure efficiently.
- **Goal: Provide benefits for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities.**
  - Maximize benefits and minimize burdens associated with implementing congestion pricing.
  - Support equitable and reliable access to job centers and other important community places.
  - Support equitable and reliable access to health promoting activities.
  - Design the congestion pricing system to support affordable travel options for people experiencing low incomes.
- **Goal: Limit additional traffic diversion from congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 to affected roads and neighborhoods.**
  - Design the congestion pricing system to limit rerouting of trips away from I-5 and I-205.
  - Design the congestion pricing system to minimize impacts to quality-of-life factors, such as health, noise, safety, job access, travel costs, and environmental quality for local communities from traffic rerouting.
  - Identify potential effects to Equity Framework identified communities and work with local agencies to address diversion routes so that they are not disproportionately impacted by rerouting.
  - Collaborate with local agencies to address the impacts of diversion to transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- **Goal: Support multimodal transportation choices to provide travel options and manage congestion.**
  - Support shifts to higher occupancy vehicles (including carpooling) and other modes of transportation (for example, taking transit, walking, biking, teleworking).
  - Collaborate with transit providers to support availability and enhancements to transit and other transportation services complementary to congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205, especially for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities.

- **Goal: Create a sustainable revenue stream to fund maintenance, improvements and modernization of existing infrastructure, as well as other transportation system investments.**
  - Develop a congestion pricing program that provides long-term sustainable funding for toll program implementation, operation, and modernization over time
  - Provide net revenues after toll program costs to fund routine operations, maintenance, modernization and improvements on the tolled portions of I-5 and I-205.
  - Generate sufficient revenue such that net revenues after toll program are available to support transportation system investments.
- **Goal: Support safe travel regardless of the transportation mode.**
  - Improve vehicle safety on I-5 and I-205 by managing congested conditions.
  - Support safe multimodal travel options (for example, walking, bicycles, transit, and automobiles) on roadways affected by congestion pricing.
- **Goal: Contribute to regional improvements in air quality and reductions in GHG emissions that contribute to climate change effects.**
  - Contribute to reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the Portland metropolitan area by managing congestion, therefore resulting in more consistent vehicle speeds, less vehicle idling, and fewer overall motor vehicle emission hours on I-5 and I-205 and on local roadways affected by congestion pricing.
  - Reduce localized air pollutants by managing congestion and improving travel efficiency, particularly where pollutants may be concentrated due to traffic congestion.
  - Reduce the per capita amount of motor vehicle miles traveled and motor vehicle hours traveled to contribute to regional improvements to air quality and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.[3]
- **Goal: Support statewide and regional economic growth.**
  - Provide for reliable and efficient regional movement of goods and people on the tolled portions of I-5 and I-205.
  - Provide for reliable and efficient movement of goods and people on local roadways affected by congestion pricing.
  - Improve regional access to jobs and employment centers, especially for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities.
- **Goal: Maximize integration with future congestion pricing systems and other transportation systems.**
  - Design a congestion pricing system that can be expanded in scale, integrated with congestion pricing on other regional roadways, or adapted to future congestion pricing system applications.
  - Design a congestion pricing system that is interoperable with other transportation systems in the region and nearby states.

[3] Reducing vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled has benefits across multiple goals, such as for goals related to congestion management and for goals related to reductions of air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles and fuel use.

References

The following documents and studies were used in preparation of this Statement of Purpose and Need and are incorporated by reference. These materials are publicly available using the weblinks provided.

Census Reporter. 2018. Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metro Area. Accessed February 4, 2020. https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US38900-portland-vancouver-hillsboro-or-wa-metro-area/.

Congressional Budget Office. 2020. *Reauthorizing Federal Highway Programs: Issues and Options.* https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2020-05/56346-CBO-Highway-Reauthorization.pdf

Elliot Henry Fackler. 2009. *Protesting Portland's Freeways: Highway Engineering And Citizen Activism In The Interstate ERA*. https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/9842/Fackler_Eliot_Henry_ma2009sp.pdf

Executive Order (EO) 20-04, "Directing State Agencies to Take Actions to Reduce and Regulate Greenhouse Gas Emissions." 2020. https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_20-04.pdf

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 1990. "NEPA Implementation: The Importance of Purpose and Need in Environmental Documents." https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/nepa/guidance_purpose_need.aspx

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 2017. Lessons Learned from Regional Congestion Pricing Workshops. https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop18015/index.htm

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). n.d. "Toll Roads in the United States: History and Current Policy." Accessed August 2021. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/tollpage/documents/history.pdf

Federal Register. 2021. Redressing Our Nation's and the Federal Government's History of Discriminatory Housing Practices and Policies; Executive Office of the President, 86 Fed. Reg. 7487. https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/29/2021-02074/redressing-our-nations-and-the-federal-governments-history-of-discriminatory-housing-practices-and

Governor Kate Brown. "Policy Offices: Energy and Climate Change." n.d. Accessed March 2019. https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/Pages/energy_climatechange.aspx.

Invisible Walls: Housing Discrimination in Clackamas County. 2019. HST 4/595, Public History Seminar: Understanding Residential Segregation in Oregon, Portland State University

Karen Gibson. 2007. Bleeding Albina: A History of Community Divestment, 1940-2000.

Metro. 2016. "Population Forecast to 2060. https://www.oregonmetro.gov/2060-growth-forecast. Accessed February 4, 2020.

Metro. 2018a. 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2020/07/29/Adopted-2018-RTP-all-chapters.pdf

Metro. 2018b. 2018 Urban Growth Report. Accessed May 2, 2022. https://www.oregonmetro.gov/urban-growth-report.

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). 2017. Rough Roads Ahead 2. Economic Implications of Deteriorating Highway Conditions. Accessed April 9, 2022. https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Planning/Documents/Rough-Roads-Ahead-2.pdf

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). 2020. Future Highway Volume Table. Accessed March 16, 2021. https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Data/Pages/Traffic-Counting.aspx#TVT-Complete

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). 2021a. Portland Region 2020 Traffic Performance Report. Accessed January 18, 2022. https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Projects/Project%20Documents/TPR-2020.pdf

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). 2021b. Observed Statewide Traffic Volume Patterns: related to COVID-19 Monitoring. Accessed July 14, 2021. https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Data/Documents/ODOT_TrafficReport_July_9_2021.pdf

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). 2021c. Regional Mobility Pricing Project Summer 2021 Engagement Report. Accessed January 3, 2022. https://www.oregon.gov/odot/tolling/Documents/2021_RMPP_Summer%202021%20Engagement%20Report_remediated_final.pdf

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). 2021d. Regional Mobility Pricing Project Workshop Summary. Accessed January 3, 2022. https://www.oregon.gov/odot/tolling/Documents/2021_1220%20-%20RMPP%20Workshop%20Summary_.pdf

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). 2022. Transportation Funding in Oregon. Accessed July 5, 2022. www.oregon.gov/odot/About/Pages/Transportation-Funding.aspx

Oregon Global Warming Commission. 2020. Biennial Report to the Oregon Legislature. Accessed March 16, 2021. https://www.keeporegoncool.org/reports/

Oregon Legislative Revenue Office. 2022. 2022 Oregon Public Finance: Basic Facts: Research Report #1-22. Accessed April 21, 2022. https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/lro/Documents/Final%20Basic%20Facts%202022.pdf

Portland Business Alliance. 2020. Value of Jobs State of the Economy. Accessed March 15, 2021. https://portlandalliance.com/assets/pdfs/economic-reports/2020-VOJ-State-of-Economy-WEB.pdf.

Redressing Our Nation's and the Federal Government's History of Discriminatory Housing Practices and Policies; Executive Office of the President, 86 Fed. Reg. 7487. 2021. https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/29/2021-02074/redressing-our-nations-and-the-federal-governments-history-of-discriminatory-housing-practices-and

The Oregonian. 2019. "Low-cost housing shut out amid riches of Lake Oswego and West Linn: Locked Out, Part 3. Accessed June 2, 2021. https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2012/06/amid_abundance_of_lake_oswego.html.

Todd Litman. 2021. Introduction to Multi-Modal Transportation Planning: Principles and Practices. Accessed July 29, 2021. https://www.vtpi.org/multimodal_planning.pdf.

United State Department of Transportation (USDOT). 2015. Multimodal Access to Public Transportation. Accessed July 28, 2021. https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/Multimodal-Access-to-Public-Transportation

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2014. Near Roadway Air Pollution and Health: Frequently Asked Questions. Accessed July 9, 2021. https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-11/documents/420f14044_0.pdf

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2021a. Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the United States: A Focus on Six Impacts. Accessed December 13, 2021. https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/climate-vulnerability_september-2021_508.pdf

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2021b. How can hybrid and electric vehicles be modeled in MOVES? Accessed December 15, 2021. https://www.epa.gov/moves/how-can-hybrid-and-electric-vehicles-be-modeled-moves.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). n.d. Climate Change and Heat Islands. Accessed January 3, 2022. https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/climate-change-and-heat-islands

Consistent with the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 168, the information in this document, and the public and agency input received, may be adopted or incorporated by reference into a future environmental review process to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Si desea obtener información sobre este proyecto traducida al español, sírvase llamar al 503-731-4128.

Nếu quý vị muốn thông tin về dự án này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin gọi 503-731-4128.

Если вы хотите чтобы информация об этом проекте была переведена на русский язык, пожалуйста, звоните по телефону 503-731-4128.

如果您想瞭解這個項目，我們有提供繁體中文翻譯，請致電：503-731-4128。

如果您想了解这个项目，我们有提供简体中文翻译，请致电：503-731-4128。

For Americans with Disabilities Act or Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 accommodations, translation/interpretation services, or more information call 503-731-4128, TTY (800) 735-2900 or Oregon Relay Service 7-1-1.

Proposed Action for NEPA Analysis

Consistent with the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 168, the information in this document, and the public and agency input received, may be adopted or incorporated by reference into an environmental review process to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

What is being proposed

ODOT is proposing to implement and operate congestion pricing on all lanes of approximately 55 miles of Interstate-5 (I-5) and Interstate 205 (I-205) in the Portland metropolitan area. Congestion pricing is a type of tolling that charges higher prices during peak traffic periods and at more congested locations. The higher toll encourages drivers to consider other options besides driving alone during rush hour. When a small number of drivers choose other options, travel times and reliability are greatly improved for drivers who choose to pay the tolls.

The purpose of the Regional Mobility Pricing Project is to use congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 to manage traffic congestion on these facilities in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area in a manner that will generate revenue for transportation system investments. The project will be evaluated as the "Proposed Action" in the upcoming National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review phase. In mid-2023, a full environmental review document, called an Environmental Assessment, will be available for public review and comment. The earliest tolling could begin under the Regional Mobility Pricing Project is in late 2025.

Development of the Proposed Action

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) initiated planning work for congestion pricing in 2017 with the Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis and continued developing the project concept over the past three years. ODOT recently conducted a planning phase[1] and will begin the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phase in September 2022. During the planning phase, ODOT consulted with regional project partners and the community to develop a project concept for congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205, which now forms the basis of the Proposed Action.[2]

Congestion and regional growth

Traffic in the Portland metropolitan area has reached a point of severe congestion and highly unreliable travel conditions during peak periods. This results in delays to auto, freight, and transit travelers, hampers economic growth, and contributes to increased greenhouse gas emissions.

---

[1] Conducted consistent with guidelines for the US Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration planning phase referred to as Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL), which represents a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that 1) considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process, and 2) uses the information, analysis, and products developed during planning to inform the environmental review process.

[2] Regional Mobility Pricing Project Summer 2021 Engagement Report and Regional Mobility Pricing Project Spring 2022 Engagement Report.

The Portland metropolitan area is growing quickly and is anticipated to continue to add new residents and jobs, resulting in more congestion on major roadways, even with planned investments in the transportation system. In 2019, the average auto commuter in the Portland metropolitan area experienced 68 hours of congestion delay per year.[3] As the region's population continues to grow, the number of vehicles using the system and the hours of congestion are expected to increase as well. The Portland metropolitan area population is expected to increase by more than 20% over the next 20 years, from 2.5 million residents in 2018 to more than 3 million by 2040.[4]

Unpredictable travel times create challenges for freight, services, small businesses, employers, and employees, and anyone using the roads. Overall, the delays due to congestion on freeways were estimated to cost the region $1.2 million per day in 2019.[5] Traffic congestion also leads to an increase in fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, as vehicles spend more time on the road idling or moving at very low speeds and repeatedly accelerating and decelerating.

This congestion results in traffic flow breakdowns (stop and go traffic on the interstates) which in turn causes safety issues and reduces the number of vehicles that can efficiently use the system. The congestion on the interstates also leads drivers to seek alternate routes, pushing cars onto adjacent roadways, which causes congestion and safety concerns on these roads.

Future growth projects and transportation modeling show us that current plans to reduce traffic are not enough. Regional transportation plans call for roadway projects, improvements in transit, and increased use of active transportation modes, which will mitigate some of the effects of congestion. However, they will not fully address the expected increase in demand on the transportation network as the region continues to grow. Congestion pricing can work in combination with these other planned projects to reduce regional traffic congestion.

Proposed Action description

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review will evaluate a single Proposed Action (congestion pricing) in comparison to a No Action scenario (no congestion pricing, further described later in this document). The Proposed Action for evaluation during NEPA includes the following project elements:

Congestion pricing will be applied to all lanes of I-5 and I-205

The project concept includes congestion pricing all lanes of the existing interstate, rather than pricing a single lane or set of lanes, building a new tolled turnpike, or tolling a newly constructed lane. Early analysis of congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 showed that tolling all lanes can reduce congestion on the

[3] Texas A&M Transportation Institute. 2021. *2021 Urban Mobility Report*.
[4] Census Reporter 2018.
[5] Oregon Department of Transportation Portland Region 2020 Traffic Performance Report.

entire interstate facility.[6] It also allows ODOT to keep toll rates lower on an individual basis, providing more affordable benefits to a greater number of users compared to single express lanes.

Assumed toll rates are based on future modeled demand and capacity

To predict how congestion pricing could alter travel patterns, the project team uses a transportation model, the Metro Regional Transportation Demand Model. Demand in the model is based on forecasts of the number and types of trips generated in the region over the course of a typical day. Assumed toll rates for the environmental analysis will be based on modeled demand and capacity.

Reducing demand on the interstates to reduce congestion requires consideration of the time and the location of these trips. In general, a higher toll rate will decrease demand more than a lower toll rate. Therefore, assumed toll rates will be higher during peak hours and at more congested locations, and lower during off-peak hours and at locations with less demand. Assumed toll rates will be lower where highway capacity is greater (for example due to there being more lanes, efficient alternate routes, or other travel options) and higher where capacity is limited.

This overall congestion pricing structure recognizes a need to limit demand as well as a desire to minimize rerouting onto surface roadways. If toll rates are too high, too many vehicles will reroute to local roads, causing congestion on these roads and impacting safety.

Toll rates are based on a set schedule (not dynamic pricing)

Scheduled toll rates allow drivers to determine the cost of their trip before they enter the tolled interstate and make an informed decision about their travel options. The toll schedule will vary based on time of day and location to account for travel demand and supply. Because there are so many possible entry and exit points across 55 miles of interstate, trip costs could vary depending on the specific trip characteristics including entry/exit points and hour of the day.

Toll rates will be monitored and adjusted after implementation

Toll rates adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission will be initially determined based on modeled demand and supply. After tolling begins, toll rates will be monitored and adjusted on a recurring basis based on actual (not modeled) traffic data.

[6] In 2017, ODOT conducted the Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis to evaluate different options for congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205. Early analysis documented in Technical Memorandum #3 compared two ways to implement the toll: 1) tolling all lanes; and 2) tolling a single lane, either by tolling an existing lane or constructing a new tolled lane in each travel direction.

All electronic tolling with gantries and transponders

The project concept is developed for an all-electronic toll collection system that does not require drivers to slow down or stop to pay at a toll booth. Gantries are bridge-like structures over the roadway, which support electronic equipment (see Figure 1). Most vehicles will be equipped with transponders, a small device placed on the inside of the windshield connected to a toll account. The equipment on the gantries will read the in-vehicle transponders or capture a picture of the vehicle's license plate. Drivers will be charged from their toll account or be sent a bill to the mailing address associated with the license plate number. Drivers without an account may be charged an additional processing fee.

Figure 1: Conceptual Image of Gantry and Electronic Equitment

Pricing on I-5 and I-205 from the Columbia River to the Boone Bridge in Wilsonville

During the NEPA phase, ODOT will study the maximum extents of I-5 and I-205 in the region to identify the greatest level of benefits and impacts. The evaluation area for the Proposed Action (see Figure 2) includes I-5 from the Interstate Bridge to the Boone Bridge in Wilsonville, Oregon and I-205 from the Glenn Jackson Bridge to the point at which I-205 intersects with I-5 in Tualatin, Oregon. Depending on the analysis, project limits may be adjusted prior to implementation of congestion pricing.

The Regional Mobility Pricing Project is being studied as an independent project, following two other proposed projects that include tolls: the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program and the I-205 Toll Project. Drivers would not pay on additional toll for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project on the sections of I-5 and I-205 that are tolled by these other projects.

Low-income toll program

The Low-Income Toll Report for the Oregon Toll Program was submitted to the Oregon Legislature and Oregon Transportation Commission in September 2022. The report presents an approach to developing a low-income toll program, including discount and income threshold options as well as best practices for implementation of an equitable, inclusive toll system. ODOT is committed to making the low-income toll program available the first day tolling begins, which is planned for the end of 2024 as part of the I-205 Toll Project. Discount options and other applicable program elements will be studied during the NEPA analysis to help inform development of the program. The program will be further defined by the Oregon Transportation Commission during the rulemaking and rate setting process.

Figure 2. Regional Mobility Pricing Project Evaluation Area

Note: The Regional Mobility Pricing Project is not studying tolling on the sections of I-5 and I-205 where tolls are proposed as part of the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program and the I-205 Toll Project.

Project benefits

The project team conducted initial studies to define the project concept and determine how congestion pricing can be most effective. The project concept has been refined throughout the planning phase and forms the basis of the Proposed Action. During the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review process, the project team will conduct additional modeling to test and further assess these results and will review and discuss the findings with partner agencies and community members to determine what further refinements should be made to the Proposed Action.

Decrease the duration of congestion on I-5 and I-205

The initial analysis found that the project concept would decrease the number of hours per day that drivers experience severe congestion on I-5 and I-205. The project concept developed during the planning phase was intended to manage severe congestion, not eliminate all congestion during all hours. If congestion were completely eliminated, tolls would have to be prohibitively high causing financial hardship and significant rerouting to the surrounding roadways to avoid the toll. The project concept was developed with consideration of the entire roadway network, not just to maximize benefits on I-5 and I-205.

Improve travel times and reliability

The initial analysis found that the project concept would improve travel times for people using I-5 and I-205, especially during peak periods, which are generally between 7 a.m. – 9 a.m. in the morning and 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. in the evening. Because there is less congestion during the midday, congestion pricing would have a smaller impact on midday and off-peak travel but would still save travelers time and provide for more reliable travel times on I-5 and I-205.

Support regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals through reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT), vehicle hours traveled (VHT) and single occupancy vehicle trips

The total number of VMT and VHT by all vehicles provides a measure of overall roadway use in the region and is often correlated with vehicle emissions. A decrease in regional VMT and VHT indicates reduced vehicle emissions because drivers are taking fewer trips or choosing closer destinations, more direct routes, carpooling, or traveling by a different mode (or a combination of these). Decrease in VHT, a measure of total time spent driving, also indicate less time spent in car due to congestion management (reduced congestion delay and improved travel times). VHT considers vehicle speeds, another key determinant of emissions, as a vehicle travelling at faster speeds (above 30 mph) generally contributes less to emissions compared to a slower moving vehicle (below 30 mph).

The initial analysis found that congestion pricing would reduce VMT and VHT on a regional and per capita level. These reductions appear to be attributed to a number of factors, including reduced peak hour congestion, shifts in travel time to less congested periods, and changes in trip destination to closer locations. Some drivers also would shift their travel mode from single occupancy vehicle trips to other modes of travel, including transit, walking, biking or carpooling, reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with driving alone.

No Action

ODOT will also evaluate a No Action scenario in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental analysis. The evaluation of the No Action scenario considers two future years (2027 and 2045) without the Regional Mobility Pricing Project's application of congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205. The scenario is used as a baseline to create an "apples to apples" comparison of the benefits and impacts of the Regional Mobility Pricing Project and to better understand the implications of not applying congestion pricing.

The Metro Regional Travel Demand Model will be used to model and evaluate the effects of the No Action scenario. The No Action scenario assumes the same levels of growth in population and employment forecast for the future years (2027 and 2045) in the region as the Proposed Action. The No Action scenario also includes all transportation system improvements that are part of the financially constrained Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that would be under construction or complete by 2045. Table 1 summaries the key major system improvements assumed that are included in the 2027 and 2045 future-year financially constrained network and No Action scenario. The No Action scenario also assumes that the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program and the I-205 Improvements Project are constructed or under construction and incorporates into the modeling the most recently available toll rate information for IBR and the I-205 Toll Project. Therefore, the same tools and regional assumptions that are used to evaluate the Proposed Action will be used to evaluate the No Action scenario.

Table 1. Major System Improvements in No Action Scenario/Regional Mobility Pricing Project

Improvement	Expected Completion Year	In 2027 Network	In 2040 Network
Interstate Bridge Replacement Program - Improvements	2040	X	√
Interstate Bridge Replacement Program - Tolls	2027	√	√
I-205 Improvements Project	2026	√	√
I-205 Toll Project	2026	√	√
I-5 Rose Quarter (both directions)	2027	√	√
OR 217N: OR 99W to Scholls Ferry (Auxiliary Lane)	2024	√	√
OR 217S: Beaverton-Hillsdale to OR 99W (Auxiliary Lane)	2024	√	√
OR 224 Milwaukie Expressway Improvements	2027	√	√
I-5N: Braided Ramps I-205 to Nyberg	2040	X	√
I-5N: Nyberg to Lower Boones Ferry (Auxiliary Lane)	2040	X	√
I-5S: Wilsonville Rd to Wilsonville-Hubbard Hwy (Auxiliary Lane)	2040	X	√
I-5S: Truck Climbing Lane (Marquam to Multnomah Blvd). PE and ROW and CON phases	2040	X	√
US 26: Widen to six lanes from Brookwood to Cornelius Pass (both directions)	2040	X	√
OR 217S: Braided Ramps Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy to Allen Blvd	2040	X	√
OR 212/224 Sunrise Hwy Phase 2: SE 122nd to SE 172nd (CON)	2040	X	√

CON = construction phase; I- = Interstate; OR = Oregon Route; PE = preliminary engineering; ROW = right-of-way; US = U.S. Route

These transportation system improvements are also assumed in baseline future year analysis (2027 and 2045) for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project. The only difference from the No Action scenario is the application of congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 associated with the Regional Mobility Pricing Project.