Memo

Metro
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Date: Wednesday, July 3, 2019

To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and Interested Parties

From: Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, Investment Areas Project Manager
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Subject: Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study

Purpose
The purpose of this memo is to introduce and provide an overview of the Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study.

Background
In December 2018, the Metro Council adopted the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the long-range transportation policy blueprint and funding strategy to address the region's existing and future transportation needs and opportunities for the system. While the RTP identifies $15.4 billion in capital investments into the system, it also includes strategies and tools to manage travel demand, fill gaps, and address inequities. Of those tools and strategies, the 2018 RTP identified a comprehensive regional study of congestion pricing as one of the near-term next steps in implementing the region's long-range transportation blueprint.

Congestion pricing is a tool that can lead to the more efficient use of existing transportation infrastructure to better move traffic and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While the tool has been identified in our plans for many years, the Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study will be the region's first effort to model and analyze different pricing concepts. Congestion pricing is the use of a price mechanism (i.e. tolls, parking fees) to make drivers aware of the costs they impose upon one another and transportation infrastructure when making trips. Pricing can lead travelers to change their behavior (i.e. shifting trip times from peak periods, traveling less often, changing travel modes, carpooling) which can result in less congestion.

Metro, working in partnership with the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), TriMet, and in coordination with ODOT, is leading an exploratory technical study of congestion pricing approaches. The Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study will look at different applications of pricing to understand the outcomes and effects of different pricing policies and programs as applied in our region. This future look explores how well concepts could work in our region. This study is separate from the work ODOT is conducting focused on Interstate 5 (I-5) and Interstate 205 (I-205) as required by the HB2017 legislative mandate.

The Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study's goal is to better understand how the region could use congestion pricing to manage traffic demand and meet climate goals in a manner that doesn't adversely impact safety of equity.

Scope of Work

The Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study will test the efficacy and performance of different pricing concepts through testing a series of modeling scenarios, research, technical papers, and feedback from experts in the field. The study will evaluate congestion pricing as a tool to accomplish the four primary transportation regional priorities identified in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan: addressing climate, managing congestion, getting to Vision Zero (safety), and reducing disparities (equity).

The study will primarily focus on evaluating three to four scenarios that apply different pricing concepts as well as mitigation options to address equity and safety issues that may emerge or potentially be exacerbated by pricing. Pricing concepts likely to be assessed are:

- Cordon: vehicles pay to enter/travel in a congested area
- Vehicle Miles Traveled/Road User Charge: a charge based on how many miles are traveled
- Roadway: a direct charge to use a specific roadway or specific roadways
- Parking: charges to park in specific areas

Some of the pricing concepts will be evaluated multiple times adjusting for a single factor (sub-concept) and/or for testing performance of certain mitigation strategies.

Results and Process

At this time, the Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study will focus on a technical evaluation of scenarios. We do not anticipate significant public outreach or convening of a project stakeholder committee for the work. Guidance for the technical study will be sought from TPAC, JPACT, and the Metro Council during regularly scheduled project updates. The project will rely on TPAC for technical input, JPACT for policy input, and the Metro Council for overall guidance of the project.

The results of the system-wide congestion pricing study are expected to inform future discussions on implementing congestion pricing for demand management purposes in our region. We expect this technical analysis to inform future policy recommendations and outline next steps for the purposes of evaluation and further study.

Metro's Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Analysis & ODOT's (Value) Congestion Pricing Project

Metro's Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Analysis and ODOT's (Value) Congestion Pricing Project are two separate and distinct projects with different goals, objectives, and purposes. A comparison of the major features of each project are listed in the table below.

Table 1: Comparison of ODOT (Value) Congestion Pricing Project and Metro Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study

	ODOT (Value) Congestion Pricing Project	**Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study**
Brief Project Description	The ODOT (Value) Congestion Pricing Project is the second phase towards implementing value pricing, also known as congestion pricing, on Interstate 5 between Going Street and Multnomah Boulevard and Interstate 205 at or near the Abernethy Bridge.	The Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study is a broad examination of different applications of pricing to understand the outcomes and effects of different pricing systems.
Main outcome of the project?	Implementable tolling projects on Interstate 5 and Interstate 205.	Technical report and findings of how different pricing concepts performed to support future policy discussions
Geographic Scope of the Project	Two specified locations only: • Interstate 5 between Going Street and Multnomah Boulevard • Interstate 205 at or near the Abernethy Bridge	Regionwide. Certain pricing concepts (e.g. cordon pricing) will have specified geographic areas of study.
Decision-makers for the project	Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)	Metro Council
Process and engagement	Full planning and public involvement process in compliance with federal regulation. Public involvement to include stakeholder committees, project advisory committee, and several workshops with affected communities, meetings, and public comment opportunities.	Key stakeholder engagement and the use of Metro committees. TPAC, JPACT, and Metro Council meetings are open to the public and allow for public testimony.

Metro will make all the information and findings from the Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study available to inform the planning and environmental linkage/pre-NEPA analysis work being undertaken by ODOT for the FHWA approved pricing proposal on I-5 and I-205. Project staff will meet regularly to discuss and coordinate opportunities to align and leverage work.

The project schedule and key tasks are listed below.

Table 2: Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study Schedule

Activity	Timeframe
Kick off Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study with project introduction at TPAC, JPACT, and Metro Council work session	July 2019
Procure consultant to support work Define and prepare scenarios for congestion pricing analysis • Develop methodology details and package into technical memorandum • Prepare initial technical memorandums defining areas which are not being addressed and studied TPAC workshop to review model capabilities and constraints for understanding scenarios Return to TPAC with further refined methodology and approach for input	Fall – Winter 2019
Prepare technical memorandums and documentation Prepare tools and inputs for scenario runs	Early 2020
Run pricing concepts and scenarios • Review results with consultant team to help interpret results • Prepare technical memorandums of results • Develop and package committee materials Return to TPAC, JPACT, and Metro Council with results for discussion	Spring 2020
Post TPAC, JPACT, and Metro Council comments and feedback, prepare modified technical inputs for second run of scenarios • Second run of scenarios with modifications • Review results with consultant team to interpret results, findings, recommended next steps	Summer 2020
Prepare and package second run of scenarios for final analysis report • Develop project findings summary sheets and communication materials	Fall 2020
Release final pricing analysis report • Expert panel event in conjunction with release of report	End of 2020/Early 2021

Questions for JPACT

- Are these the right potential scenarios to study?
- Are there other questions?