

# Memo

Date: April 15, 2021  
To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and Interested Parties  
From: Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, RCPS Project Manager  
Subject: Updates on the Regional Congestion Pricing Study

---

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the Regional Congestion Pricing Study (RCPS) key findings from technical analysis and prepare JPACT for an upcoming panel discussion.

## **Request to JPACT**

Provide input and comment on the congestion pricing analysis and modeled findings. Provide input on areas JPACT would like the Expert Review Panel to provide feedback on.

## **Background**

The RCPS is evaluating the performance of different pricing concepts by testing a series of modeling scenarios and documenting research, memos, and feedback from experts in the field. The study is evaluating congestion pricing as a tool to accomplish the four primary transportation regional priorities identified in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP): addressing climate, managing congestion, getting to Vision Zero (safety), and reducing disparities (equity).

**Project Goal:** *To understand how our region could use congestion pricing to manage traffic demand to meet climate goals without adversely impacting safety or equity.*

The study is evaluating four different pricing concepts:

- **Cordon:** charges drivers to enter and sometimes to drive within a defined boundary
- **Vehicle Miles Traveled/Road User Charge:** a charges drivers based on how many miles are traveled by auto
- **Roadway:** a charges drivers to use a specific roadway or specific roadways
- **Parking:** charges drivers to park in specific areas

This analysis will provide a foundational understanding of how congestion pricing tools could perform with our region's land use and transportation system. This information will be combined with research and analysis around implementation and equity considerations. The intent is to inform policy makers and existing and future projects in our region.

## **RCPS Coordination with Portland, ODOT, and Other Groups**

Since our last presentation to JPACT, the RCPS project team has continued technical analysis, engaged TPAC as our technical committee, and presented to other interested groups such as Clackamas TAC, Washington Co. TAC, the City of Portland, and ODOT. Staff also engaged equity experts from Metro's Committee on Racial Equity (CORE), Portland's Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility (POEM) Community Task Force, and ODOT's Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC). In addition, staff have continued to meet regularly with the project teams for concurrent pricing at the City of Portland (POEM) and ODOT (I-5 and I-205 Tolling Projects).

On February 25, 2021, Metro staff conducted a TPAC Workshop focusing on project findings from modeling scenarios designed to test the congestion pricing tools. Materials from that meeting are

included as attachments. **Attachment 1: TPAC Regional Congestion Pricing Study – Workshop #3 Memorandum** provides definition of the scenarios tested and big picture findings.

## **RCPS Key Findings**

### Context

The RCPS findings are based on outcomes from modeled scenarios that have **not** been adjusted to address concerns that the modeled outcomes reveal for the scenarios. The study scenarios provide a general assessment of performance without taking into account the potential for discounted charges for key groups or targeting of revenue investment to address areas of concern that arise from the analysis. Equity of a pricing program is largely determined by three things:

1. who is receiving the benefit of more reliable/better travel options,
2. who is being charged and how much, and
3. where and how the revenues are invested.

Any actual project proposed would be expected to address issues around congestion, safety, climate, and equity—considering targeted discounts, project design, and/or funding investments that address concerns.

### RCPS Big Picture Findings

#### **All four types of pricing are shown to help address congestion and climate priorities.**

- All eight scenarios reduce the drive alone rate, vehicle miles traveled, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- All scenarios increase daily transit trips, except Roadway A which has minimal change.

#### **Overall regional transportation costs and individual traveler costs vary by scenario.**

- All eight scenarios increase the overall cost for travel for the region, but some scenarios spread the costs widely while others concentrate them on fewer travelers. Those that spread the costs also have the highest overall cost for the region.

#### **Geographic distribution of benefits and costs varies by scenario.**

- Roadway scenarios reduce delay on freeways, but increase delay on arterials relative to the Base Scenario.
- Corridor scenarios create delay around the perimeter of the cordon boundaries with drivers avoiding paying the charge.
- Distribution of benefits and costs have implications for where fee discounts and investments from revenues should be targeted.

#### **There are tradeoffs for implementing pricing scenarios**

- Vehicle miles traveled scenarios have positive results for all eight summary metrics for congestion, climate, and equity, but also had the highest overall travel costs for the region. However, the costs are spread widely as they are shared by all drivers.

**Attachment 2: JPACT Summary of Key Findings** describes in greater detail how the scenarios performed relative to the Base Scenario on eight performance measures.

**Congestion Pricing Expert Review Panel Webinar (April 22, 2021)**

Understanding the potential performance of congestion pricing in our region requires using our model and mapping in new ways. Metro hired a consultant team with extensive congestion pricing and transportation equity expertise to help shape this work. Our consultant team is led by Nelson\Nygaard and experts from HNTB, Silicon Transportation Consultants, Sam Schwartz Engineering, TransForm, EnviroIssues, and PKS International.

In addition, Metro has invited experts from around the world to review our methods and findings and provide insight and lessons learned based on their extensive experience. This highly-regarded group has worked on congestion pricing in San Francisco, New York, Atlanta, Seattle, London, Vancouver, and Stockholm among other locations. After a moderated discussion, Metro Council and JPACT will have time to ask questions of the panel. Regional partners and interested parties are invited to listen in. Details on the Regional Congestion Pricing Study Expert Review Panel webinar are included in **Attachment 3**.

**Questions for JPACT**

- What questions or comments do JPACT members have regarding the findings?
- Are the modeling outputs and findings intuitive?
- Are there key areas you would like the Expert Review Panel to weigh in on?

**Next Steps**

Staff will incorporate feedback from the TPAC, JPACT, Metro Council, and the expert panel and augment the model and geographic analysis with equity and implementation considerations to better assess the potential for different congestion pricing options to succeed in our region. The equity analysis will incorporate feedback gathered from equity experts at Metro's Committee on Racial Equity (CORE), the City of Portland's Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility (POEM) Community Task Force, and ODOT's Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC). In addition, the findings will be reviewed by an independent Expert Review Panel that will evaluate our methods and findings and provide insights gleaned from their work in North America and Europe. JPACT is invited to the Expert Review Panel discussion. Draft and final reports will be shared with the TPAC, JPACT, and Metro Council in June/July.

Table 1: Regional Congestion Pricing Technical Study Schedule

Activity	Timeframe
Create draft findings memorandum- include feedback from TPAC Workshop, Equity Groups, and research from consultant team and staff	April/May 2021
Share draft findings with regional leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metro Council Briefing</li> <li>• JPACT Briefing</li> </ul>	April 15, 2021
Expert Review Panel Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congestion pricing experts with experience on pricing projects in different parts of the world weigh in on our findings and provide insights from work done elsewhere</li> </ul>	April 22, 2021
Revise/incorporate feedback and create final analysis report with feedback from TPAC, JPACT, and Metro Council. Return to TPAC, JPACT, and Metro Council with results for discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPAC presentation --June 4, 2021</li> <li>• JPACT presentation-- June 17, 2021</li> <li>• Metro Council presentation--June 24, 2021</li> </ul>	May - June 2021
Release final pricing analysis report	June/July 2021

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: TPAC Workshop #3 Memorandum

Attachment 2: JPACT Summary of Key Findings

Attachment 3: Congestion Pricing Expert Panel Invitation

