

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCEPTING THE) RESOLUTION NO. 21-5179
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE)
REGIONAL CONGESTION PRICING STUDY) Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
) Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with
) Council President Lynn Peterson

WHEREAS, the greater Portland region has experienced significant growth and demographic changes, that are forecasted to continue into the future; and

WHEREAS, the region's significant growth has resulted in increasing congestion, particularly on the greater Portland area's throughways; and

WHEREAS, this congestion affects quality of life as travelers sit in cars or on transit, and impacts the economy through delayed movement of goods and services and lost productivity; and

WHEREAS, congestion impacts climate, equity, and safety, and disproportionately affects Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) community members and people with lower incomes who typically have fewer resources and often need to travel long distances between their homes and their jobs; and

WHEREAS, ongoing efforts to address congestion in the region include directing growth in designated centers and corridors served by high-quality transit in combination with investments in system and demand management strategies, improving transit service and reliability, increasing bicycle and pedestrian connections and adding roadway capacity in targeted ways; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) found that these strategies are not sufficient for addressing growing congestion and that the region must also manage demand; and

WHEREAS congestion pricing, wherein drivers are charged directly for their use of roadways, bridges, or parking, is used in congested cities around the world to improve mobility, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and to raise revenue to fund investments in their transportation systems; and

WHEREAS, congestion pricing can implemented to replace or supplement the existing per gallon gasoline tax, which delivers declining revenues because it does not adjust for inflation and because the vehicle fleet is becoming more fuel efficient; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) identified congestion pricing as a high priority, high impact strategy to address congestion in ways that also advanced achievement of the region's climate, equity, and safety goals and directed further study of this strategy prior to the next update to the RTP; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) adopted policies in the 2018 RTP to expand the use of pricing strategies to manage vehicle congestion and encourage shared trips and the use of transit; and in combination with increased transit service, consider use of pricing strategies to manage congestion and raise revenue when one or more lanes are being added to throughways designated in the RTP; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Congestion Pricing Study established a goal to understand how our region could use congestion pricing to manage traffic demand to meet climate goals without adversely impacting safety or equity, but not to recommend projects or to implement any pricing measures; and

WHEREAS, the study was conducted with input from several regional committees and elected bodies, such as the Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC), the Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC), the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), Metro's Committee on Racial Equity (CORE), the City of Portland's Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility (POEM) Task Force, and ODOT's Equitable Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC), the County Coordinating Committees (staff and policymakers), and direction from JPACT and Metro Council; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Congestion Pricing Study project coordinated with the Portland Bureau of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Transportation as they conduct their own pricing studies; and

WHEREAS, on April 22, 2021, Metro hosted an expert review panel made up of congestion pricing experts with diverse expertise in North America and Europe to provide input on the study methods and findings and to share lessons learned for their experiences elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, the expert panel endorsed the study's technical approach and findings related to potential benefits and impacts of the pricing tools addressed, and offered recommendations for further study and implementation; and

WHEREAS, the study evaluated four different congestion pricing strategies in the Metropolitan Planning Area—a Vehicle Miles Travelled Fee, Cordon Pricing, Roadway Pricing, and Parking Pricing--for their potential effectiveness in greater Portland based on whether they could help the region achieve the four priorities as laid out in the 2018 RTP – advancing equity, improving safety, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and managing congestion; and

WHEREAS, the study identified considerations around equity, implementation, and ways to maximize benefits and address impacts of pricing projects; and

WHEREAS, the study found that:

1. all four congestion pricing strategies could help the Portland Metropolitan Region to meet the four regional transportation priorities adopted in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan;
2. all four congestion pricing strategies could reduce drive alone rates, vehicle miles travelled and emissions, and increase transit ridership;
3. some congestion pricing strategies could cause vehicle diversion in some locations resulting in areas of delay and decreased job accessibility by auto or transit;
4. all four strategies could increase the overall cost for travel in the region, but individual traveler costs would vary;
5. the benefits and burdens of congestion pricing may not be distributed equitably across the region, potentially disproportionately impacting BIPOC and other marginalized communities;
6. the flexibility of congestion pricing tools could be used to address equity concerns and the design and implementation of a program could mitigate negative impacts; and

WHEREAS, the study provides policymakers and jurisdictions with information on promising pricing strategies, recommendations for trade-offs to consider and further evaluate based on modeling and data analysis, and recommendations for equitable implementation; and

WHEREAS, on July 15, 2021 JPACT recommended acceptance of the report by the Metro Council; and

WHEREAS, by accepting the report, the Metro Council hereby recognizes the value in using the findings to inform planning, policy, investment priorities and ongoing efforts to manage congestion, advance equity, improve safety and reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the region, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Metro Council hereby accepts the findings and recommendations in the Regional Congestion Pricing Study Report, as shown in the attached Exhibit A.
2. The Metro Council hereby directs staff to build upon existing policy in the RTP by incorporating the findings and recommendations from the study in the 2023 RTP and to use them to inform planning, policy development, and investment priorities through the 2023 RTP update.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 29th day of July, 2021.

Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney