

Meeting minutes

Meeting: **Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC)
Regional Congestion Pricing Study Workshop #3**

Date/time: Thursday, February 25, 2021 | 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Place: Virtual online meeting via Web/Conference call (Zoom)

Members Attending

Tom, Kloster, Chair
 Karen Buehrig
 Chris Deffebach
 Lynda David
 Eric Hesse
 Katherine Kelly
 Jeff Owen
 Lewis Lem
 Idris Ibrahim

Alternates Attending

Jamie Stasny
 Steve Williams
 Allison Boyd
 Jaimie Huff
 Jon Makler
 Glen Bolen

Members Excused

Jessica Berry
 Dayna Webb
 Don Odermott
 Chris Ford
 Karen Williams
 Laurie Lebowsky
 Jessica Stetson
 Donovan Smith
 Gladys Alvarado
 Wilson Munoz
 Yousif Ibrahim
 Taren Evans
 Rachael Tupica
 Jennifer Campos
 Rob Klug
 Shawn M. Donaghy
 Jeremy Borrego
 Rich Doenges

Affiliate

Metro
 Clackamas County
 Washington County
 SW Washington Regional Transportation Council
 City of Portland
 City of Gresham and Cities of Multnomah County
 TriMet
 Port of Portland
 Community Representative

Affiliate

Clackamas County
 Clackamas County
 Multnomah County
 City of Happy Valley & Cities of Clackamas County
 Oregon Department of Transportation
 Oregon Department of Transportation

Affiliate

Multnomah County
 City of Oregon City & Cities of Clackamas County
 City of Hillsboro & Cities of Washington County
 Oregon Department of Transportation
 Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
 Washington State Department of Transportation
 Community Representative
 Community Representative
 Community Representative
 Community Representative
 Community Representative
 Community Representative
 Federal Highway Administration
 City of Vancouver, Washington
 Clark County
 C-Tran System
 Federal Transit Administration
 Washington Department of Ecology

Guests Attending

Will Farley
Jean Senechal Biggs
Kari Schlosshauer
Heather Willis
Brian Hurley
Emma Sagor
Andrew Plambeck
Bob Kellett
Dave Roth
Guy Benn
Jennifer Wieland
Ning Zhou
Mat Dolata
Maurico Lederer
Michael Espinoza
Mike Reynolds
Nathaniel Price
Shoshana Cohen
Sorin Garber
Garet Prior
Chris Smith
Alice Bibler
Sarah Iannrone

Affiliate

City of Lake Oswego
City of Beaverton
Safe Routes to Schools

Oregon Department of Transportation
Portland Bureau of Transportation
Portland Streetcar
Portland Bureau of Transportation
City of Tigard
TriMet
Nelson Nyygard

WSP

Portland Bureau of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration
Portland Bureau of Transportation

Oregon Department of Transportation
Portland Planning & Sustainability Commission

The Street Trust

Metro Staff Attending

Margi Bradway, Dep. Director Planning & Dev.	Kim Ellis, Principal Transportation Planner
Malu Wilkinson, Investment Manager	Caleb Winter, Senior Transportation Planner
Eliot Rose, Senior Transportation Planner	Grace Cho, Senior Transportation Planner
Ted Leybold, Resource Manager	Chris Johnson, Research Manager
John Mermin, Senior Transportation Planner	Matthew Hampton, Senior Transportation Planner
Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, Sr. Trans. Planner	Matt Bihn, Investment Transportation Planner
Alex Oreschak, Associate Planner	Peter Bosa, Research Center
Alan Gunn, Metro	Marie Miller, TPAC Recorder

1. Introductions and Workshop Purpose (Chairman Tom Kloster)

Chairman Kloster called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Introductions were made. Reminders where Zoom features were found online was reviewed.

2. Metro Regional Congestion Pricing Study Update (Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara)

Ms. Mros-O'Hara provided an overview of the agenda and what the study findings have found since the last workshop. The pricing scenarios have been further evaluated with modeling projections. Costs benefit comparisons with other cities utilizing congesting pricing measures were provided. The project study schedule was shown nearing the completion planned in June this year.

3. Pricing Scenarios: High Level Findings, Costs and Benefits (Alex Oreschak, Matt Bihn)

Mr. Oreschak presented information on pricing scenarios, noting the study does not recommend or propose

implementing any pricing measures, and the scenarios proposed are tied to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) pricing strategies region's four priorities. Key performance measures study included Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), Mode Share, Accessibility to Jobs (Transit & Auto), Delay, Emissions, and Cost (total cost of travel for the region and cost per traveler paying a charge).

Four "tools" with multiple possible program designs and assess overall value were reviewed. The study is evaluating four different pricing concepts to understand how they would perform in our region with our land use and transportation system. Pricing concepts being assessed are:

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

Table 1 on page 2 of the memo in the workshop packet *Base and Refined Pricing Model Scenarios* describes the Base Scenario and the eight refined scenarios analyzed (two from each family tool).

Summary of scenario performance:

- All four scenario types help address climate and congestion priorities.
- All eight scenarios reduce the drive alone rate, vehicle miles traveled, and emissions, while increasing daily transit trips.
- Geographic distributions of benefits and costs vary by scenario.
- There are tradeoffs for implementing pricing scenarios.

Summary of cost impacts:

- All eight scenarios increase the overall cost for travel for the region, but some scenarios distribute the costs widely while others concentrate them on fewer travelers. Those that distribute the costs also have the highest overall cost for the region.
- Overall regional transportation costs and individual traveler costs vary by scenario.
- Distribution of costs and benefits have implications for where fee discounts and revenues should be targeted.

The summary of all key findings from the modeling was provided by a graph showing how results were compared from Metro's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan to determine approximate benchmarks to indicate positive or negative impacts for each metric. All eight scenarios provide at least a small positive change for drive alone rate and emissions, while seven of the eight scenarios provide at least a small positive change for daily VMT and daily transit trips.

The two VMT scenarios and the Parking B scenario have all positive regional results across metrics, while the Parking A scenario has mostly positive results, but also minimal changes for two metrics (Daily VMT and Job Access via Transit). The two Cordon scenarios and the two Roadway scenarios have more mixed results. Both Cordon scenarios have small to moderate negative changes for both delay and job access via auto. This appears to be the result of drivers seeking to avoid the charge in the cordon area and remaining on highways or nearby arterials instead of utilizing surface streets within the cordon boundaries. The two Roadway scenarios see moderate to large negative changes in arterial

delay, as well as minimal change to small negative change in Job Access via Transit. This appears to be the result of drivers seeking to avoid the charge on the highways and diverting to arterial streets near the charged roadways.

The summary of congestion pricing cost impacts was provided:

- All eight scenarios increase the overall cost for travel for the region, but some scenarios distribute the costs widely while others concentrate them on fewer travelers. Those that distribute the costs also have the highest overall cost for the region.
- Overall regional transportation costs and individual traveler costs vary by scenario.
- Distribution of costs and benefits have implications for where fee discounts and revenues should be targeted.

Following regional travel costs examples, benefits, with some exceptions, show that each of the pricing scenarios move the needle in the right direction in multiple categories: VMT per person declines, Job access increases, Drive alone rate decreases, GHG and other emissions decrease, Total transit trips increase and Our region's most congested roadways see some relief.

Comments from the committee:

- Jeff Owen asked what cost per time period represented pertaining to long-term or all day-term parking. Chris Johnson answered these parking terms are aligned with trip purpose. Long term parking costs are aligned with working trips, while short term costs are applied to other trips purposes (shopping, personal business).
- Jaimie Huff noted that while it might fall outside of this study's scope, has the project team identified any potential impacts to land use (housing costs), the health of sensitive environmental areas, public health, etc.? Are those impacts something that will be studied further in the future? Ms. Mros-O'Hara noted these were not covered in the metrics of the study but important elements for consideration.
- Christina Deffebach noted the importance to economic assess to jobs with the equity focus areas. Lewis Lem asked for further clarification if possible longer window for commuting which could result in more positive outcomes across the scenarios. It was noted to have consistency with the RTP on these transit times.
- Sorin Garber asked if the scenarios include any added capacity such as new priced lanes. Ms. Mros-O'Hara noted Chthe only change is the price added to travel.
- Lewis Lem noted Portland compared to other places where pricing has been implemented globally and whether there are peer metros (population size, level of congestion) where pricing has been implemented.
- Christina Deffebach asked if modeling was done for variable tolls. Mr. Oreschak noted it was not.
- Steve Williams noted with pricing effects between arterial roadways and highways, the traffic changes, and need for a coordinated approach to regional and state roadways.
- Nathaniel Price asked if roadway diversions considered changes in transit or no trips taken at all. Mr. Bihn noted the models included changes by mode and destination, but not changes in routes or no trips taken.

- Chris Smith asked if rebates on tolls with impacts to costs considered in the study. Mr. Oreschak noted they were not, but rebates and discounts regarding equity considerations would be discussed later in the presentation.
- Lewis Lem asked if an asterisk might be added to show you are not assuming changes in transit when analyzing travel times or costs, which Mr. Oreschak confirmed.
- Jeff Owen asked if these were based on the 2027 fiscal constrained projects if they were to happen, which Mr. Oreschak agreed was the baseline with scenarios planned.
- Jon Makler noted the RTP priorities blended with the study scenarios. Were these showing the performance measure results expected? Mr. Oreschak noted the safety measures were not included in the scenarios but addressed in investment opportunities. There are geographic costs vs benefit concerns, and other examples where the balance between benefit and costs can help shape the policy design.
- Steve Williams asked if identifying populations that experience significant changes of impact with the pricing scenarios have been developed, and what level of analysis has been made between benefits with those paying small amount vs larger amounts. Mr. Bihn noted that VMT areas would charge everyone, but in cordon areas they are a smaller group, which varies costs. Ms. Mros-O'Hara added this study looks at the regional overview of the subject, where more specific studies will come later.
- Eric Hesse noted the significance with pricing approaches that impact the “green” factor, but even more broadly having projects move forward that can interact with local and regional systems.
- Ning Zhou noted that since the model already assumed the mode shift, so the driver who will see the higher parking cost with small time saving is the one having to pay and not able to shift to transit. Peter Bosa noted the narratives were completely theoretical. These examples would occur if there were people whose travel match the description.
- Chris Deffebach agreed on the importance of looking at the interactions through the regional system, and that this study doesn't provide answers but opportunities with the variables. It was suggested to be careful not to charge too much with tolls. Parking would not provide much revenue, and the gas tax may not be sustainable. There is a price point consideration and we should look at this at the regional level for value.
- Guy Benn asked how the VMT scenario might be implemented or achievable. Mr. Oreschak noted VMT or odometer tracking are options. The state OReGO program link was shared in chat: <https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Programs/Pages/OReGO.aspx> Gareth Prior noted that ODOT is testing a pilot of VMT in the Portland Metro Area, called a Road Usage Charge this year. Link: <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Programs/Pages/OReGOPilot.aspx>

Will Farley noted OReGO showed great promise for charging VMT, but why hasn't anyone looked at charging VMT at vehicle registration when at DEQ? Nathaniel Priced noted in chat the Pilot OReGO is working on looking at ways to use technology to adjust the VMT based on location. Putting a geofence around a corridor, a region, a county etc. to adjust what the VMT rate would be. They are also looking at a changing VMT based on time of day which can incorporate variable rate and cordon pricing components in the system.

- Maurico Lederer noted the complexity with these areas of discussion and having this a significant regional discussion. Questions on the revenue distributions will need to be evaluated which are powerful tools regarding pricing. It was noted these plans could provide political guidance for regional decisions.
- Jaimie Huff asked for more information on the pricing range of trips between scenarios, and if the final report would include assumptions discussed here. Ms. Mros-O’Hara noted best judgment on pricing was used in the scenarios, and assumptions, best practices and considerations with implementations would be in the final report.

4. **Five Minute Break**- the committee took a brief break in the meeting.

5. **Equity: What we have learned from talking with Equity Experts (Elizabeth Mros-O’Hara)** Ms. Mros-O’Hara provide an overview of the outreach made to specific groups for targeted feedback on analysis equity focus. Feedback included information on how pricing can be designed to improve equity, ways to measure equity impacts (access to jobs, travel time, costs, mode shift, and congestion).

Stakeholders provided input on best practices, noting:

- General agreement that our metrics -better jobs access and geographic focus on benefits and costs -were helpful to understand pricing performance
- Agreement that any pricing project will need to assess the equity benefits and consideration in much more detail
- Agreement that current system is inequitable

Staff heard many key themes from stakeholders:

Community must be engaged throughout projects

- Promises made for equity are not guaranteed
- How can we ensure targeted revenue, discounts, etc. are carried out?
- Pricing should be paired with an access strategy
- Access to Jobs, education, and community services
- Public health should be considered –*emissions helpful, but there is more*
- Focus on the future state we want then assess where the benefits occur
- Concern that wealthier drivers will just pay the toll and continue business as usual
 - Focus on using revenues to make alternative transportation and transit more viable for BIPOC and low income communities (ex. “transportation wallet”)
- Concern over potentially disparate impacts
- BIPOC and low-income residents, esp. those who commute off-peak and to multiple jobs and urban areas versus more suburban/rural areas
- Issues with car culture/difficulty in using transit/privacy concerns
- How can a pricing project increase equity rather than “do no harm”?
- How will COVID / work from home change commute patterns and needs?
- Interest in continuing the conversation

Comments from the committee:

- Jon Makler noted we hope we can be more explicit about which equity problem we are aiming to solve. Displacement and location-based externalities (exposure to pollution) come mind.
- Steve Williams asked if the uses for funds work under Oregon laws. Ms. Mros-O’Hara noted it would depend on interpretation, examples of how others have done this, with the memo on

implementation addressing this issue. It was suggested to analyze the base case to address 2020 costs with transportation to projected 2027 costs/benefits when helping the public understand perceived pricing methods.

- Jeff Owen asked how soon we may see potential solutions to these issues/questions. Ms. Mros-O'Hara noted the potential pricing designs may be tied to projects and policy. Applications from guidelines will be helpful.
- Eric Hesse agreed that engaging equity through the tools mentioned would be useful. It was suggested to use the graphs shown as part of the equity analysis, especially with the access variables, since not all baselines are equitable. Discounts, subsidies and cost mitigation considerations are all important factors for transit equity plans. It might be helpful to review assumptions from past studies that have changed over time, and where improving conditions in the analysis can be made.
- Brian Hurley asked if the stakeholders had discussed ways to measure progress on the suggestions. Ms. Mros-O'Hara notes discussions included metrics used and ways they could be used elsewhere, with the need to do more. It was noted the geographic analysis was helpful.

6. Revenue Investment Opportunities (Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara) Improving scenario performances was discussed. Noting that reinvestment, discount and design considerations could include any pricing scenario presumably would generate more revenue than it costs, the region/communities will be asked how best to use those revenues and asking what design considerations, targeted reinvestments, or targeted areas for discounts could improve performance including equity and safety.

As examples, three scenario maps were shown with projected results. The VMTB scenario shows uneven distribution of benefits. Roadway B scenario shows that a higher charge on freeways results in arterials performing worse. Changes in volumes compared to base with Cordon A & B shows congestion pushed to arterials and freeways around the cordons.

Comments from the committee:

- Eric Hesse noted that past transit response from air quality issues resulted in the fare less square development. Concerning the cordon areas these issues may be relevant again. Concerning the reinvestment of revenue, options to consider may be altering fares, free transit, and additional scenarios with combination of options.
- Jeff Owen noted it was important to keep in mind the benefits from the pricing considerations. Input and help crafting the message to JPACT as the project study completes soon is encouraged.
- Chris Deffebach noted that bus lanes on arterials only work if bus services are offered there. Regarding revenues spent, roadway funds are going down and there are more electric vehicles on roadways now. With VMT charges it would be important to have a reality check on estimates, and think region-wide. It was suggested to think of the bigger picture and keep in mind how the region functions as a whole.
- Steve Williams noted that the cost of operation is expensive and significantly cuts into revenue. Capital costs for implementation and ongoing costs for operations need to be considered.
- Eric Hesse noted that the PBOT task force was looking at mitigation strategies with assessments for consideration which could be shared. Agreement on caution with expected costs/revenues until more is known. There is a current legislative session happening with user fee tax force bill consideration that should be noted.

7. Expert Review Panel (Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara) The staff will be convening a group of congestion pricing experts with experience in US, Canada, and Europe to look at our efforts and provide guidance on next steps. The date for this meeting will be April 22 in the morning (exact time TBD). Metro Council, JPACT, and TPAC will be invited to hear the discussion, as will pricing partners.

8. Schedule and Next Steps (Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara) The overall project schedule was shown. The next steps were outlined:

- Metro Council and JPACT – April 15
- Expert Review Panel – April 22
- TPAC, JPACT, MPAC and Metro Council – June 2021
- Final Report – June 2021

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned by Chairman Kloster at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Marie Miller, TPAC Recorder

Attachments to the Public Record, TPAC RCPS workshop meeting, February 25, 2021

Item	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOCUMENT DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT No.
1	Agenda	2/25/2021	2/25/2021 TPAC Agenda	022521T-01
2	Memo	2/25/2021	TO: TPAC and Interested parties From: Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, RCPS Project Manager RE: Regional Congestion Pricing Study – Workshop #3	022521T-02
3	Attachment 1	2/25/2021	Draft Summary of Key Findings	022521T-03
4	Presentation	2/25/2021	Regional Congestion Pricing Study	022521T-04