

Public Acceptability of Congestion Pricing

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A woman with dark hair, wearing a brown top and a black scarf, is seated at a table. She is gesturing with her hands while speaking. In front of her are several documents, a water bottle, and a coffee cup. The background shows other people at tables in a conference room setting.

Talking About Congestion Pricing

Probing Citizen Attitudes in the Washington Metropolitan Region

John Swanson
Principal Transportation Planner
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Transportation Planning Board

Webinar on the Public Acceptability of
Congestion Pricing
May 3, 2012

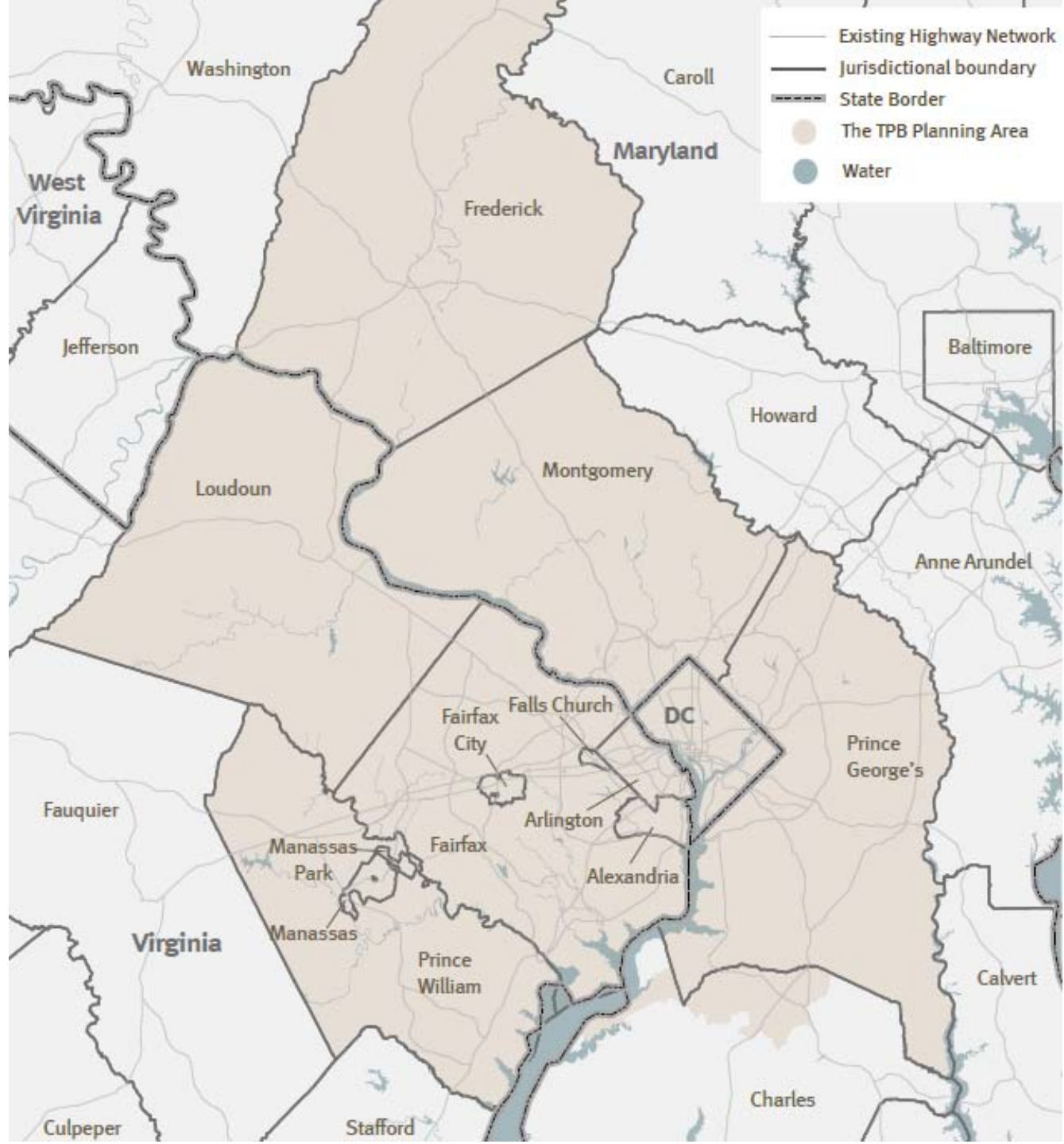
The National Capital Region

People

- 5.3 million today
- 6.9 million by 2040
- 30% increase

Jobs

- 3.3 million today
- 4.3 million by 2040
- 39% increase



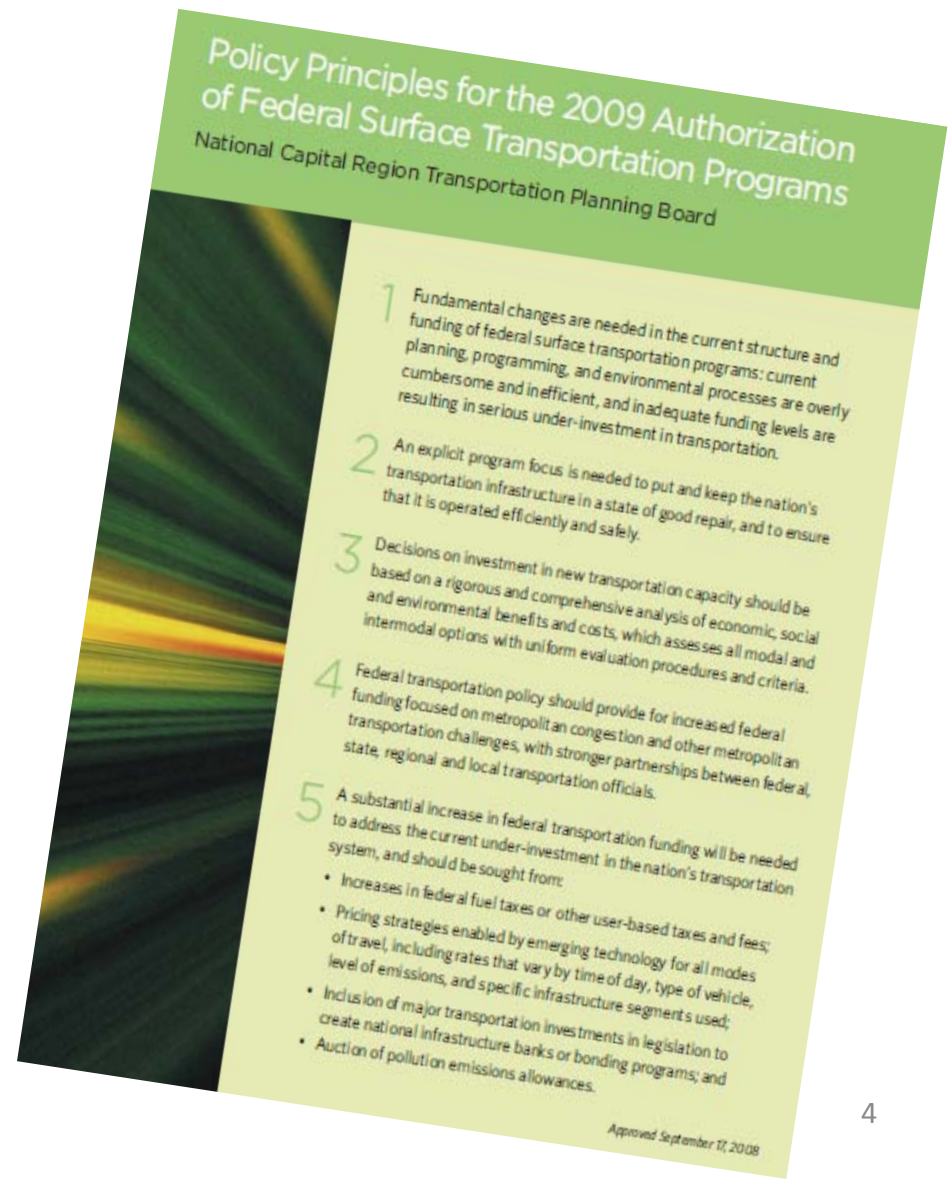
A legacy of progressive planning



Regional long-range policy

...”Pricing strategies enabled by emerging technology for all modes of travel, including rates that vary by time of day, type of vehicle, level of emissions, and specific infrastructure segments used.”

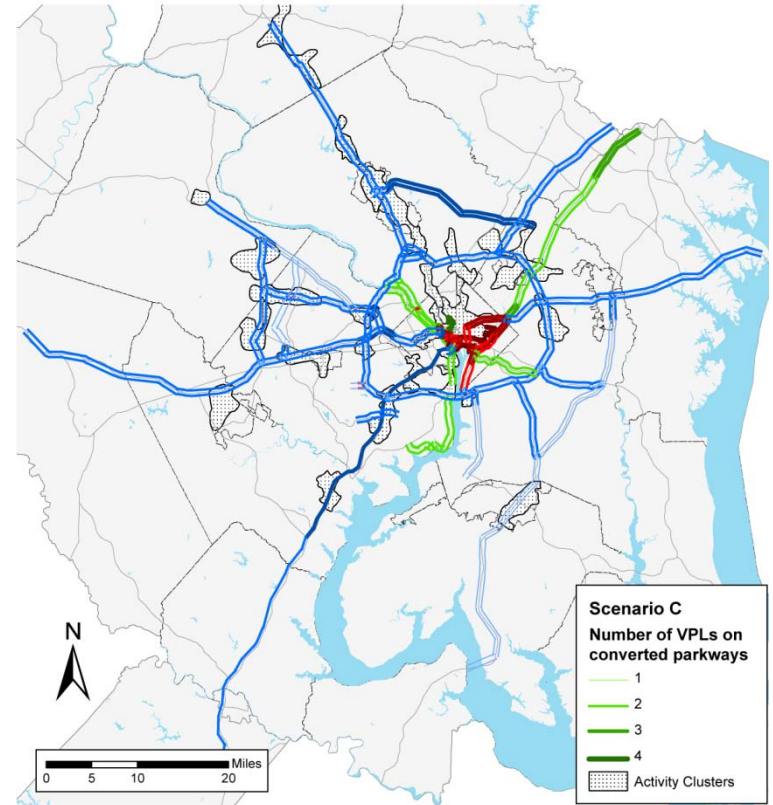
- TPB Policy Principles, 2008



Regional discussions, regional analysis



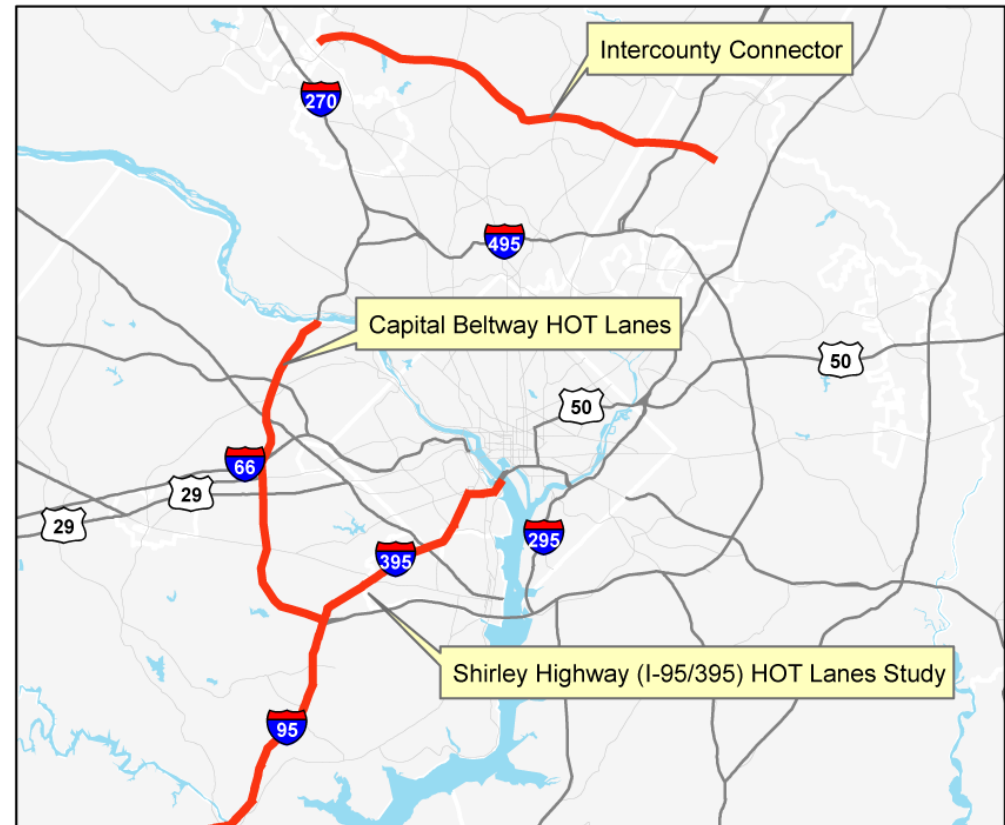
Regional Conference on Value Pricing, 2003



Analysis of a variably priced lane network, 2007

Value pricing projects in the TPB's Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP)

- Intercounty Connector (ICC)
 - 2004 CLRP Update*
- Beltway HOT Lanes
 - 2005 CLRP Update
- I-95/I-395 HOT Lanes
 - 2007 CLRP Update



Variably Priced Lanes (VPLs):

- VA: HOT lanes, HOV 3+ free
- DC, MD: Express Toll Lanes (ETL), all pay

Brookings Institution proposal

- Authorized by Alice Rivlin & Benjamin Orr in 2009
- “proposes replacing state gas taxes with regional road-use pricing”
- “A demonstration project should be launched in the Washington region that uses GPS transponders to categorize motorists’ travel”

“The national capital region should serve as an example of what truly sustainable transportation policy looks like for the rest of the nation.”

B Metropolitan Policy Program
at BROOKINGS

GREATER WASHINGTON RESEARCH AT BROOKINGS

Road-use Pricing: How Would You Like to Spend Less Time in Traffic?

Benjamin K. Orr and Alice M. Rivlin

Severe congestion and underfunded public transportation systems in the Washington, D.C. region and nationwide call for a more sustainable way of pricing transportation. This brief proposes replacing state gas taxes with regional road-use pricing that takes into account the effects of vehicle travel while simultaneously providing incentives to reduce traffic congestion and pollution and improve public transportation.

To achieve this, a demonstration project should be launched in the Washington region that uses GPS transponders to categorize motorists’ travel based on distance, level of congestion, and type of vehicle. The transponder would calculate the totals for each category and drivers would be charged accordingly when they purchased gas. Tourists and other motorists lacking the GPS device would continue to pay the full gas tax. At an average price of between 9 and 15 cents per mile, such a policy could reduce congestion by 75 to 80 percent.

I. Introduction

According to the Texas Transportation Institute, Washington D.C. area commuters on average wasted a workweek and a half (60 hours) due to traffic congestion in 2005, the second worst in the nation.¹ The cost to the average commuter in terms of time and gas wasted was the equivalent of almost \$1100. Since 2000 this delay has increased by an entire workday. For comparison, in 1982 area commuters were only delayed 16 hours, amounting to barely \$143 (in 2005 dollars) in losses. Additionally, over a quarter of area workers 16 or older not working at home had one way commutes longer than 45 minutes in 2007. Three percent had commutes longer than 90 minutes.

More recently, traffic has eased slightly as vehicle miles traveled fell three percent in the spring of 2008 versus a year earlier in a study conducted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. However, this reduction was due to the poor economy and last year’s record gas prices. The price of gas has since fallen and the recession will not last forever; therefore the decrease in traffic is almost certainly temporary. And there are more of us every year. From 2005 to 2007 the Washington area added 88,877 people over the age of 16 to the commuting labor force (those who do not work from home). The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments projects that the metropolitan area as a whole will add 1.6 million new residents by 2030, working 1.2 million new jobs—a recipe for ever-increasing congestion.

The traditional response to traffic congestion has been to build more and bigger roads. Increasing road capacity seemed like a reasonable response, and yet congestion kept getting worse. The problem was that the demand for roads always rose to meet (and quickly exceed) capacity and congestion kept getting worse. Economists suggest the reason: Except for a few toll roads, motorists do not directly pay to use the road. If something is free—or appears to be—demand tends to outstrip supply. Motorists do not roughly relate to the miles they drive, but once they have a full tank of gas, they drive as much as they want. It is a country lane or a congested road.

Joint research project

- Grant awarded in 2011 from the FHWA's Value Pricing Pilot Program
- Partners:
 - Transportation Planning Board at MWCOCG & Brookings
- Public engagement consultant:
 - AmericaSpeaks

Research Problem

Transportation revenues are decreasing and congestion is increasing.

Congestion pricing is a tool that could partially solve these twin challenges.

But public support for congestion pricing is assumed to be very low.

Research Questions

- As people learn more about congestion pricing, will their attitudes about it change?
- Upon which factors (costs & benefits) does their acceptance hinge?
 - What factors matter to people?
 - How strongly do people feel about those factors?
 - What factors cause people to change their minds?

Deliberative Forums



Sampling the region

- Five forums
- October 2011-
January 2012
- Each forum
4½ hours
- Approximately
300 paid
participants
- Cross section
of the region



“Why are you here?”

How we explained the forums to participants:

- *Congestion pricing is a type of road tolling that could help solve our funding and congestion problems.*
- *But, do you believe the benefits are worth the costs?*

Let's talk about it...

Information presented on status quo and pricing options



Citizen
Transportation
Forums:



Should we use
congestion pricing
to help solve
our traffic woes?

Springfield
December 3, 2011



Baseline Information

Big challenges ahead

- **Severe congestion**
- **Funding shortfalls**

What are the costs of congestion?

For the average driver in 2010:

- **Time:** More than 100 hours of delay
- **Money:** Value of lost time is more than \$2,000



Why is funding so tight?



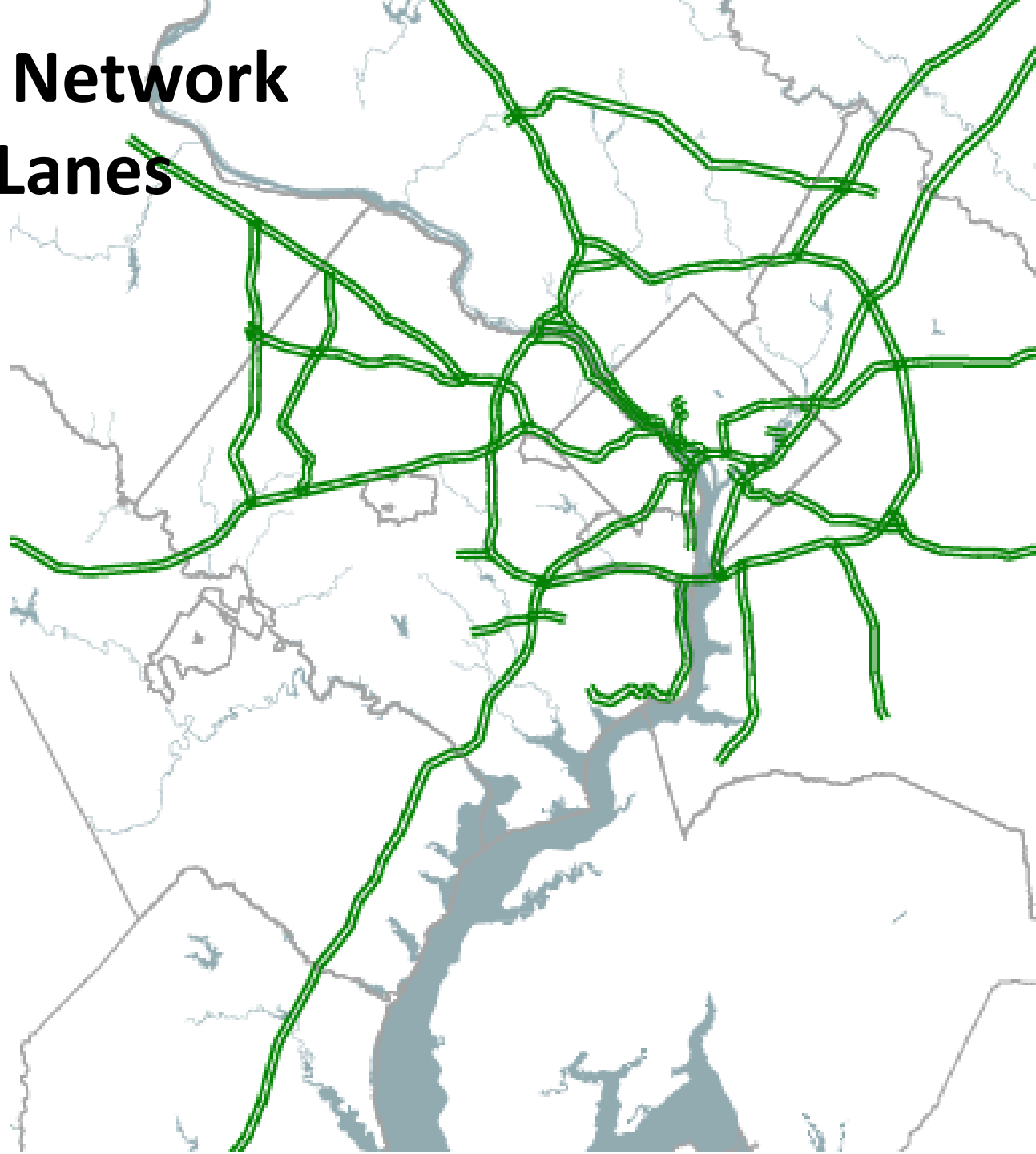
Gas taxes haven't been increased in years

	Tax Per Gallon	Year of Last Increase
Federal	18.4 cents	1993
Virginia	17.5 cents	1986
Maryland	23.5 cents	1992
D.C.	23.5 cents	2009

Scenario 1: A Network of Priced Lanes

What if...

all major
highways
had at least
one tolled
lane with
free-flowing
traffic?



Scenario 2: Pricing on All Streets and Roads

What if...

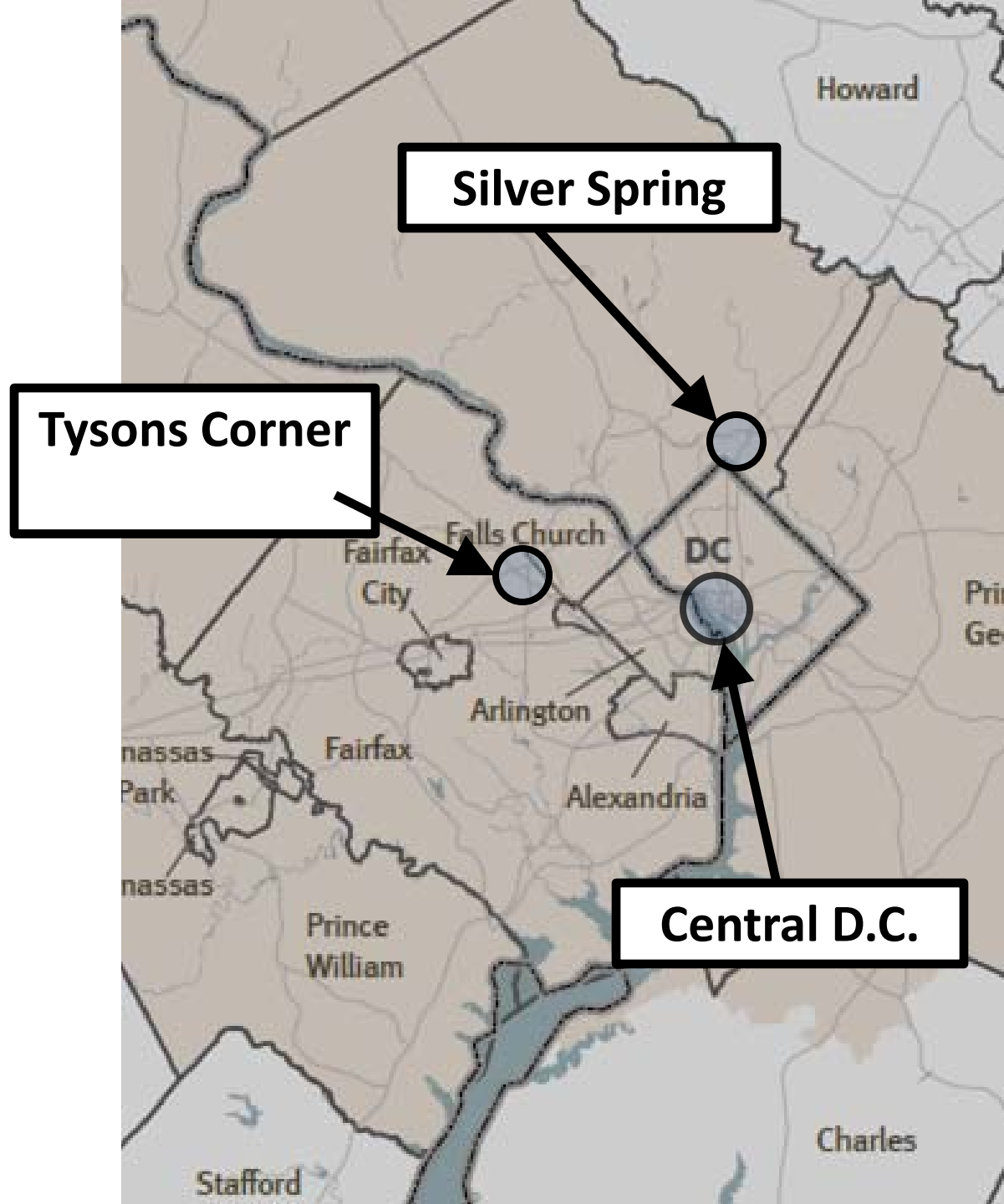
instead of
paying gas
taxes drivers
paid per-mile
fees
calculated by
GPS?



Scenario 3: A Priced Zone

What if...

drivers had to pay
to enter central
Washington, D.C.,
Silver Spring, or
Tysons Corner?



Data Sources

A combination of qualitative and quantitative data:

- Keypad poll questions (including demographics)
- Scribe notes
- Paper surveys

Small groups discuss benefits and costs



Scribes record discussions



Theme teams summarize comments



Polling questions throughout the day

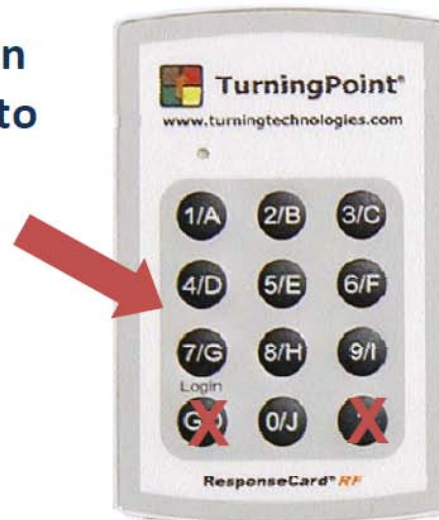


“How to use the keypads”

Keypad Polling



Press the button corresponding to your choice...



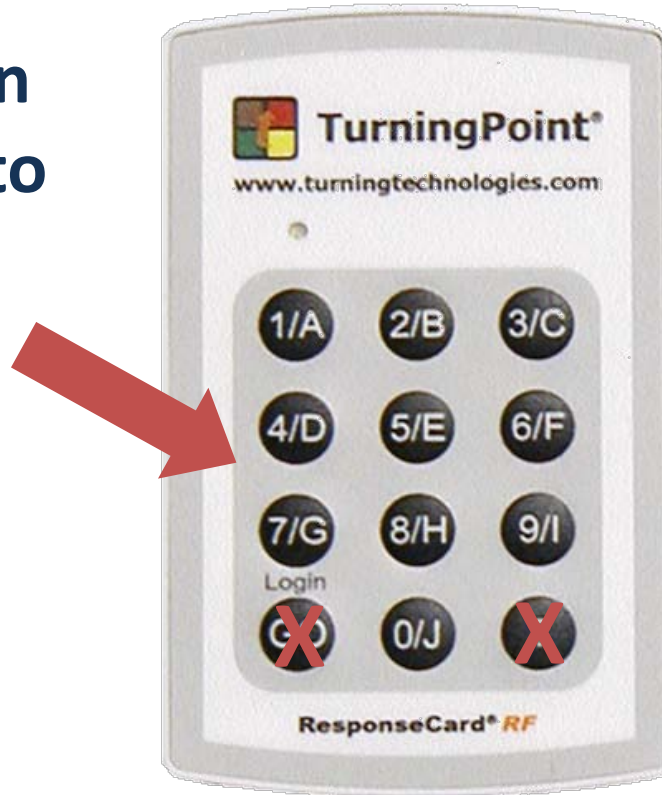
If you make a mistake, just vote again!

For multiple choice votes, just enter all numbers one after the other



Keypad Polling

Press the button corresponding to your choice...



If you make a mistake, just vote again!

For multiple choice votes, just enter all numbers one after the other

Categories of comment

- Perceptions of the status quo
- General receptivity to congestion pricing overall (reasonableness)
- Perceptions of effectiveness
- Attitudes toward the three scenarios
- The influence of key factors on levels of support

Polling question example: Beginning of the Springfield Forum

Gas taxes should be raised to pay for transportation improvements.



Polling question example: End of the Springfield Forum

**Gas taxes should be raised to pay for
transportation improvements.**



Some poll results

- More people think congestion is a critical problem than think funding is a critical problem.
 - At the end of the forums, 54% of participants “strongly agreed” that funding was a critical problem, while 82% “strongly agreed” that congestion was a critical problem.

Some poll results

- From beginning to end of the forum, major increase in support for gas tax increases.
 - At the beginning of the forums, 21% of participants thought gas taxes should be raised to pay for transportation improvements. By the end, 57% thought they should be raised.

Some poll results

- Lack of confidence in the public sector's ability to improve transportation even if enough money were available.
 - At the beginning of the forums, 39% of participants “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with the statement: “If the government had more money so spend on transportation, I am confident we would have a better transportation system.”

Some poll results

- Congestion pricing seen as “reasonable” by a sizable number of people.
 - At the end of the forum, 45% of participants thought congestion pricing seems like a reasonable way to deal with the region’s transportation problems.

Some poll results

- Congestion pricing seen as more effective tool for generating revenue than for reducing congestion.
 - As an example: For Scenario 2, 46% said they “strongly” or “somewhat” believed it would be effective in solving our funding problems, while only 29% expressed similar beliefs in the scenario’s effectiveness in reducing congestion.

Some poll results

- Scenario I – a priced-lane network on the region’s highways – gets the most support and is seen as the most effective.
 - By the end of the forums, 60% of participants said they strongly support or somewhat support Scenario I.
 - 50% of participants said they believed that Scenario I would be “strongly” or “somewhat” effective at reducing congestion. 60% of participants said they believed that Scenario I would be “strongly” or “somewhat” effective in solving our funding problems.

Some poll results

- A variable VMT fee (Scenario 2) is a very hard sell.
 - By the end of the forums, 86% of participants said they “somewhat opposed” or “strongly opposed” a variable VMT fee (76% said they “strongly opposed” it).

Some poll results

- People are evenly divided in their support for a priced zone system (Scenario 3).
 - 50% of participants, at the end of the forums, said they would “strongly support” or “somewhat support” Scenario 3.

Some poll results

The data seem to suggest:

- Doubts about congestion pricing's effectiveness in relieving congestion;
- Assumptions that congestion pricing is primarily for raising money;
- Acceptance -- *with education* -- that transportation funding is a big problem, but not that congestion pricing is the solution;
- Gravitation toward options that feel incremental and familiar.

But we're still in the middle of analysis

- More quantitative analysis of poll and survey results
- Review and analysis of scribe notes
- Discuss draft findings in review sessions
- Finalize this summer

Thanks!

For more information:

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Awareness and Acceptance of Pricing

David L. Dye, P.E.
Deputy Secretary

Paula Hammond, P.E.
Secretary

Steve Reinmuth
Chief of Staff



Rob Fellows
Toll Planning and Policy Manager

FHWA Webinar
May 3, 2012

Presentation Outline



- **Context – Tolling in Washington**
- **Overview of the Awareness and Acceptance of Pricing (A&AP) project**
 - Regional Coordination
 - Lake Washington Toll Implementation Committee Support
 - Pricing Task Force Support
 - Additional Surveys and Final Report
- **Final Project Report**
 - Provides a succinct narrative on recent toll developments in Washington
 - Provides links to useful information and research
 - Where to find it:



Final Report:

Awareness and Acceptance of Pricing Project

Submitted by:
Washington State Department of Transportation
Puget Sound Regional Council
May 2011



<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/tolling/planning/aap.htm>

Current Tolling Projects in Washington



Tacoma Narrows Bridge

State's first electronic tolling facility opened July 15, 2007



SR 167 HOT Lanes Pilot Project

State's first high-occupancy toll lanes launched May 3, 2008

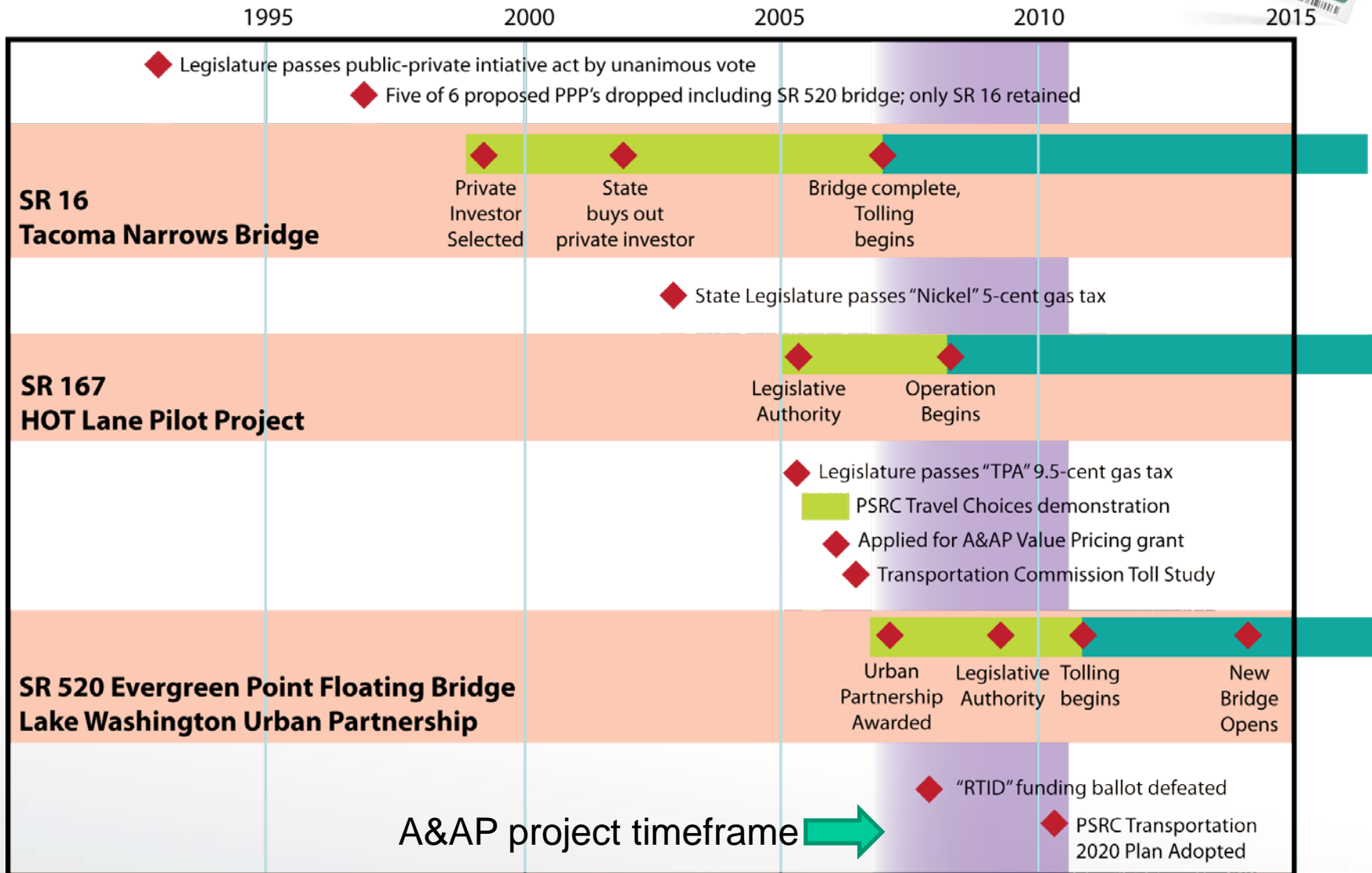


SR 520 Evergreen Point Floating Bridge

- Partially funded with major gaps
- Urban Partnership Agreement
- Significant outreach effort
- Tolling began December 2011



Context: Washington Tolling Timeline



Project Activities



Summer
2007

2008

2009

2010

Summer
2010

◆ Acceptance and Awareness of Pricing Project Begins, Urban partnership grant awarded

Regional Coordination Activities to support legislative action on SR 520 tolling

- Summary of national research about public attitudes on tolling
- Focus groups
- Guiding principles
- Legislative outreach

◆ Legislature establishes Toll Implementation Committee for SR 520

Toll Implementation Committee to inform the public on SR 520 tolling and document comments

- Toll rate scenarios
- Traffic diversion analysis
- Toll technology review
- Public and business outreach
- Public opinion research

◆ Legislature authorizes variable tolling on SR 520

Pricing Task Force Support

to incorporate tolling options into Transportation 2040, the Puget Sound's regional transportation plan

- Developed and analyzed regional pricing alternatives

◆ Pricing options selected

◆ DEIS

◆ Adoption

Evaluation

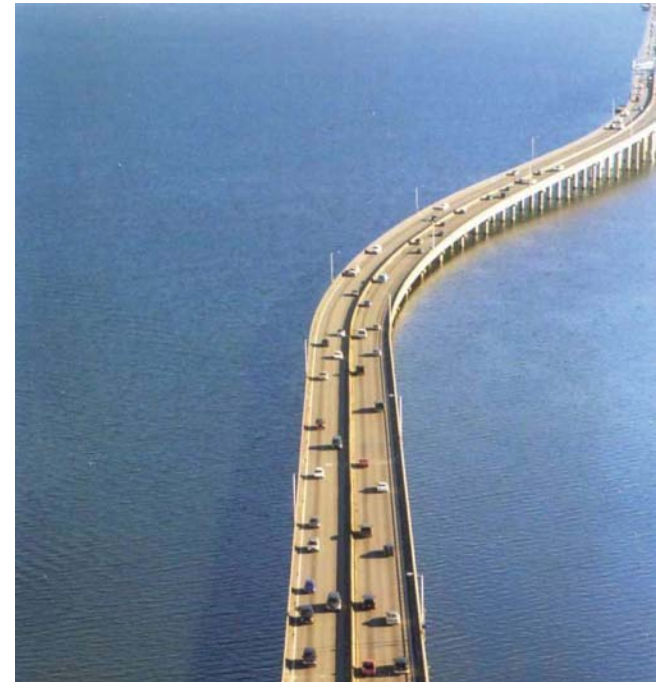
- Surveys
- Final report

Regional Coordination Activities



Products:

- **Pricing Acceptance Public Opinion Analysis**, July 2007. Includes analysis of public acceptance research in other cities.
- **Pricing Focus Group Research**, December 2007.
- **Tolling in the Puget Sound Region: Discussion of Commonly Raised Questions and Issues**, February 2008.
- **House Transportation Committee presentation**, January 2008. For briefing legislators on the Lake Washington Urban Partnership Agreement, and on toll choices for the Puget Sound region.



This information supported the Legislature's decision to begin an outreach process leading to toll authorization the following year.

Findings from National Research



Summarized public opinion research conducted in other areas using pricing. These elements contributed to public acceptance:

- **Educating public** about what value pricing is
- **Communicating project benefits** and coordinating with partners to ensure consistent messaging
- **Providing data and facts** to support the benefits statement
- **Implementing incrementally** so people can experience the benefits
- **Emphasizing travel options** and choices
 - Alternative “free” routes
 - Other travel modes
 - Different travel times/rates
- Practicing **transparent communications about revenue uses**
- **Coordinating messages** between cooperating agencies



Findings from Focus Groups



Focus groups engaged King County drivers and transit riders in congestion pricing discussions. Findings included:

- Participants' **awareness was high** of different tolling strategies
- Participants **understood HOT lanes more than full-corridor tolling** as congestion management strategy
- Lack of understanding regarding tolling all lanes led to **skepticism**
- **Barriers to public acceptance of tolling** exist (philosophical beliefs; government mistrust)
- No standouts for clear terminology to describe “congestion pricing;” “tolling” was well received, but other modifiers were often added
- Participants support for HOT lanes increased when they learning that low-income people also support them
- **Improved travel options** are an incentive to support tolling
- Participants recognized they contribute to congestion, but that didn't transfer to a sense of responsibility to help alleviate it

“Guiding Principles”



- Tolling should **provide measureable user benefits**
- Understand effects of tolling on the transportation system, and how to encourage good system performance
- Understand how toll rate structures affect societal, environmental and land use decisions over time
- **Consider geographic, income and social equity** and fairness
- **Establish a forum for regional input into tolling**
- Ensure effective long-term system-wide operations
- **Privacy protections must be adequate**
- Different finance approaches have different implications for projects
- Public understanding, awareness and acceptance is needed
- **Understand toll rate implications** for revenues, operations and different needs
- Integrate current and future toll collection and enforcement strategies
- **Define and clarify how and when toll revenues can be used**

Tolling 101 Legislative Topics



- **SR 520 and Urban Partnership Update**

- **Context:**

Tolling is one of many traffic management strategies

- **Tolling approaches:**

Bridges, HOT/express toll lanes, corridor tolling, system tolling

- **Tolling objectives:**

Funding, traffic management and environmental benefits

- **Successes elsewhere:**

US HOT lanes, international cordon/area pricing

- **Puget Sound region:**

Studies, possible projects – near and long term

- **Regional coordination efforts:**

Guiding principles, research findings, information still needed



Urban Partnership on SR 520



- **WSDOT, PSRC and King County entered into an Urban Partnership agreement with FHWA**
 - **Early tolling** – before new bridge construction
 - **Variable tolling** – tolls vary based on average forecast traffic volumes
 - **Technology** – installed active traffic management systems
 - **Transit** – new buses and park and ride lot expansion
 - **Telecommuting** – enhance existing commute trip reduction programs
- **The Washington State Legislature convened a Toll Implementation Committee to assess public opinion prior to authorizing SR 520 tolls**
 - One year outreach program, with report presented the following legislative session



Toll Implementation Committee (TIC)



- Comprised of the Transportation Commission Chair, WSDOT Secretary and Executive Director of the MPO (PSRC)
- Charged with reporting to the Legislature on:



- Developing and evaluating **single and two-bridge toll rate scenarios**
- Evaluating potential **traffic diversion and mitigation** measures
- Evaluating **advanced tolling technology** and emerging applications
- Exploring opportunities to **partner with the business community**
- **Conferring with mayors and city councils** of adjacent jurisdictions
- Conducting **public work sessions and open houses**.
- **Providing a report to the Governor and Legislature** by January 2009.



Activities Funded by A&AP Project



- Development of **tolling and financing scenarios**
- **Modeling peer review**
- **Diversification analysis** and mitigation options
- **Impact on low income users**
- Open road tolling **technology assessment**
- **Outreach:**
 - to mayors and councils
 - to businesses and civic leaders
 - open houses
 - website 
 - phone and web surveys
- **Report to the Legislature**

Build520.org



Toll Scenarios Examined by TIC








Variables:

- Single-point vs. segmental tolls
- SR 520 tolls only, or both bridges
- Variable vs. flat tolls
- Toll exemptions
- Toll rate ranges

Reported on:

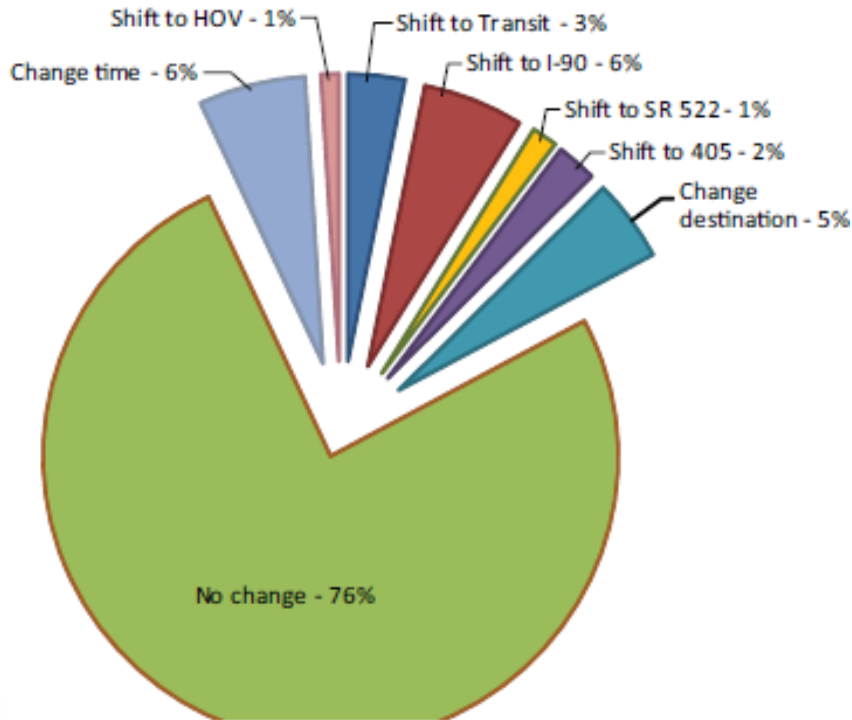
- Traffic volumes and performance
- Financial capacity
- Diversion effects

1	Toll 520 in 2016, when project is complete	520-Only Toll Scenarios
2	Toll 520 in 2010, when construction begins	
5	Flat rate toll on 520 (in 2016) 	
6	Maximize funding by tolling only 520 	
7	Toll 520 in 2010; increase rate in 2016 	
3	Toll both bridges in 2016	Two-Bridge (520 & 90) Toll Scenarios
4	Toll 520 in 2010 and 90 in 2016	
8	Toll 520 at a higher rate than 90 in 2016 	
9	Toll both bridges in 2010 	

Diversion Analysis Findings



Toll only SR 520 scenario (peak period)



Toll both bridges scenario (peak period)

- Decreased volumes on both bridges compared to existing conditions

Recommendations to minimize and mitigate diversion impacts

Keep traffic on SR 520:

- Variable tolls
- Manage toll rates
- Improve/expand transit
- Commute trip reduction
- Replace SR 520 bridge to add capacity

Mitigate diversion:

- System-wide monitoring
- Toll mitigation account
- Transit improvements
- Accelerate I-405 widening

Outreach to Low Income Populations



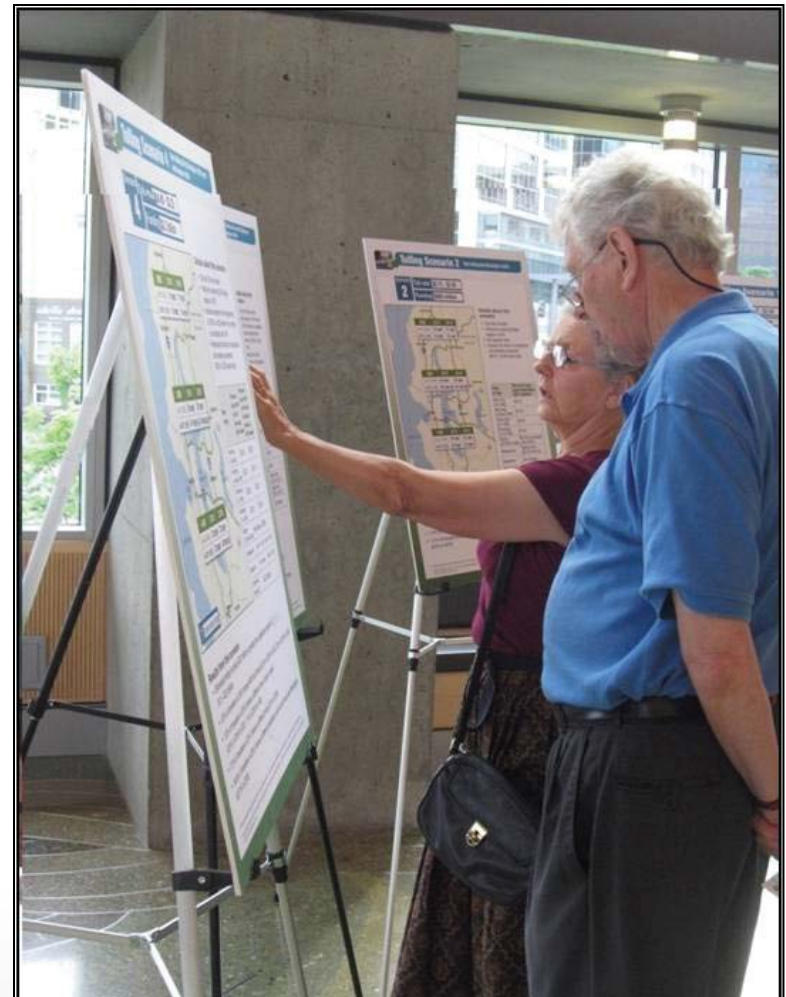
- **TIC conducted outreach to understand potential impacts of tolling on low-income communities:**
 - Widely publicized open houses and website
 - Conducted surveys and focus groups
 - Met with social service agencies
- **Research and outreach suggested tolls have greater impact on low-income families; higher portion of their incomes go toward tolls**
- **TIC urged consideration of several steps to ease burden; WSDOT's *Good To Go!* electronic tolling program includes several:**
 - **Many payment options**, including cash and EBT
 - **Partner with retail outlets** for transponder purchase and replenishment
 - **Increase transit service**
 - **Translate tolling materials** into many languages
 - **Educate service providers**
 - Consider a **transportation allowance for EBT card users**
 - Examine relationship between toll rates and transit fares



TIC Public Outreach Efforts



- Committee members and staff visited city councils and business groups
- **16,000** visitors to the build520.org website
- **7,800** participants in a web survey gauging opinions on tolling scenarios
- More than **8,000** written comments to the committee
- More than **700** people attended at least one open house
- Over **20** jurisdictions and stakeholder groups provided input into the process
- Phone survey of **1,200** randomly selected area residents



Web and Phone Survey Findings



Respondents support	Web survey	Phone Survey
Support tolling to help fund new 520 bridge.	Nearly 2:1 margin (59% to 30%)	More than 2:1 margin (64% to 30%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-bridge users highest at 67% • I-90 users lowest at 60%
Support for tolling 520 increases when respondents learn about electronic tolling and “no toll booths.”	69%	73% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 520 users highest at 78% • Non-bridge users lowest at 69%
Respondents support variable tolling.	More than 2:1 margin (65% to 31%)	More than 2:1 margin (70% to 27%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 520 users highest at 73% • I-90 users lowest at 66%
Respondents support tolling in 2010 if it results in lower tolls and financing costs.	Nearly 3:1 margin (60% to 23%)	Less than 2:1 margin (58% to 36%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-bridge users highest at 59% • Users of both bridges lowest at 55%
Support goes down for tolling in 2010 if it makes 520 faster, but slows down I-90.	55%	51% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 520 users highest at 56% • I-90 users lowest at 47%
Support for tolling both bridges goes up (but not among I-90 users) if it makes speeds go up on both bridges.	61%	61% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 520 users highest at 75% • I-90 users lowest at 47%
Support for tolling both bridges goes up (but not among I-90 users) if toll rates are lower than just tolling 520.	61%	61% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 520 users highest at 73% • I-90 users lowest at 47%
Support for tolling both bridges goes up among I-90 users when they know improvements will be made to I-90.	64%	65% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 520 users highest at 75% • I-90 users lowest at 53%

Final Report to the Legislature



The 2009 Washington State Legislature authorized toll funds to be used for SR 520 construction

Overall findings from outreach efforts:

- Generally, **people supported tolling, including early tolling** on the SR 520 bridge.
- **Most people supported tolling both I-90 and 520**, although most of I-90 users opposed this concept, especially without I-90 improvements.
- Those supporting tolls also **support variable tolling** to reduce congestion and improve traffic conditions.
- **Electronic tolling was also supported.** Most understood that traffic flow would be better if no toll booths are needed.



520 Tolling Implementation Committee

Tolling Report Prepared for the
Washington State Legislature
January 28, 2009

Pricing Task Force



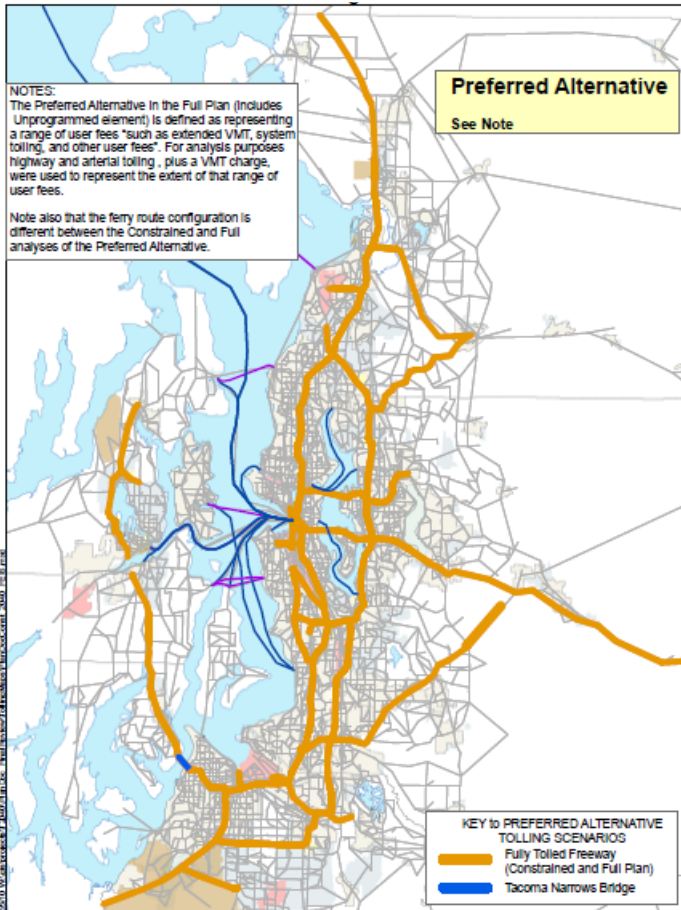
- **The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) convened a group of local elected officials and opinion leaders as a Pricing Task Force to:**
 - Work with other agencies, the public and outside interests
 - **Pose policy questions** regarding roadway pricing
 - **Provide information** on roadway pricing's role in improving mobility, meeting environmental and economic objectives and providing needed funding for transportation investment in the region
 - Develop a set of **objectives, criteria, measures and roadway pricing alternatives** to be integrated and evaluated with other transportation strategies
 - Make recommendations on a **comprehensive set of roadway pricing strategies that should be included in Transportation 2040**
- **A&AP provided primarily logistical support and development of meeting materials**

Transportation 2040 Alternatives



- Alternative 1: **Demand and system management focus** and additional transit services. Limited traditional and tolling revenues.
- Alternative 2: **Strategic roadway and transit expansion focus**, including a two lane (HOT) lane network. Sizable new traditional transportation funding and modest reliance upon tolling.
- Alternative 3: **Strategic highway expansion and management balance** through user fees/tolling. Modest additional traditional funding for non-highway uses and tolls to finance highway uses.
- Alternative 4: **Integrated mix of investments** to improve the highway efficiency and strategic transit and arterial investments. Limited traditional transportation funding; significant toll financing for highway investments.
- Alternative 5: **Efficiency of the roadway system (freeways and arterials) and reduced vehicle use to reduce carbon dioxide emissions**. Replaces fuel-based financing with vehicle miles traveled fees and/or congestion tolls on the arterial and freeway network.

Transportation 2040 Preferred Alternative



- Preferred alternative passed the General Assembly with 98% support
- Incremental tolling expansion between 2010 and 2030
- Routes in gold would be tolled by 2040



Additional Evaluation and Close-out



- **Conducted survey of existing toll system users on SR 16 (Tacoma Narrows Bridge) and the SR 167 HOT lanes**

- **Conducted public opinion research into potential express toll lane system on I-5**
 - Focus groups
 - Survey
 - These were in advance of any specific project proposal

- **Prepared the final project report**

Feedback from Existing Toll Users



- **Conducted phone survey of existing Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB) and SR 167 HOT lane users**
 - SR 167 HOT lane **users support tolling for both construction and traffic management**; general purpose lane users prioritize construction.
 - Of those whose opinions of tolling changed after opening the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, **Good To Go! account holders became more positive towards tolling (70%); non-account holders were more negative (68%)**.
 - Of those whose opinion changed about tolling after opening SR 167 HOT lanes, **70% of account holders, 47% of non-account holders and 55% of carpool users became more positive** towards tolling.
 - About **1/3 of TNB users increased bridge use** after tolling began, but 59% said bridge use decreased due to rate hikes.
 - of SR 167 users who were affected by HOT lanes, **about half reported less congestion and greater feeling of safety**. Half of potential carpoolers reported greater likelihood of carpooling.
 - **Over half of SR 167 users agreed that HOT lanes were beneficial** and should be expanded to other Puget Sound highways.

Feedback on I-5 Express Toll Lane Concept



▪ Focus group findings:

- **Unsure express toll lanes would improve traffic**
- **Did not want to pay to use existing highway**
- Some said they might try express toll lanes if in a hurry
- **Did not support increasing carpool lane requirements from 2 to 3+** passengers; concerned less people would carpool
- Appealing statements: benefits of reliability, congestion reduction, and faster travel speeds were more compelling than others

▪ Survey findings:

- 25% supportive of two-way express toll lanes on I-5; **43% unsupportive**
- **Almost 1/2 support converting reversible express lanes** to toll lanes
- 1/2 would use at least 1x per month
- 1/3 would use express toll lanes for faster trip
- **Over 1/2 would pay up to \$2 to increase speed to 45 MPH**
- Only 1/3 support increasing HOV requirement from 2 to 3+ people
- Appealing statements: electronic tolling, tolls fund I-5 corridor, environmental benefits, increased speeds and reliable trips, variable toll rates based on congestion, all lanes benefit

Final Project Report



- Provides a narrative description of recent tolling developments in the Puget Sound region
- Provides links to a lot of information developed during the course of the study
- This was not a research project, and did not develop generalized findings – these findings are specific to specific projects at a specific point in time
- Download it at:



Final Report:

Awareness and Acceptance of Pricing Project

Submitted by:
Washington State Department of Transportation
Puget Sound Regional Council
May 2011



<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/tolling/planning/aap.htm>

Personal Observations



- **Promote good projects and user value, not just tolls**
 - **SR 520 success has a lot to do with a strong project**, a clear need, and several years of community engagement
- **Don't start conversation with the public without considering equity and identifying how revenues will be used**
 - Early PPP experience
 - I-5 express toll lane surveys showed **negative response to tolling when use of revenues are not addressed**
- **Implementation matters**
 - **Is the toll agency credible, responsive, transparent?**
 - Success and follow-through are essential for future support
- **Support for tolling is always conditional**
 - **Strong policy support and past successes don't relieve the need to create strong toll proposals and conduct active outreach all over again**



Questions?

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