

**Metro****AD HOC CONGESTION PRICING COMMITTEE**
March 19, 2008**SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY CONGESTION PRICING INITIATIVES****ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE****RECOMMENDATION**

Receive and file this update on the status of public outreach activities for Los Angeles County Congestion Pricing Initiatives.

ISSUE

This report outlines the current status of our work on our congestion pricing public outreach efforts. At its last meeting, the Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Committee asked that we return with a status report and discussion of issues.

DISCUSSION

Attachment A provides a summary of the current status of our public outreach activities related to the congestion pricing initiatives that are being considered in Los Angeles County. Attachments B through D include some public outreach materials that are being developed jointly with our Communications Department to be used in planned public meetings and presentations. These include: i) a draft fact sheet about congestion pricing (Attachment B); ii) a summary of projects similar to the one we proposed in our grant application to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) that have been implemented in the country (Attachment C); and, iii) a draft script for a video that describes our congestion pricing initiatives, the objectives to be achieved, and the reasons for pursuing these strategies (Attachments D).

NEXT STEPS

We will continue updating the Board on our public outreach activities for the Los Angeles County Congestion Pricing Initiatives. We also plan to return to the Board in April 2008 with our recommendation for awarding a contract for professional services to help us develop the Los Angeles County Congestion Pricing Operating Plan, which will include a

Public Outreach and Marketing Plan. We will continue seeking input from the Board and refining our public outreach plan and activities accordingly. If we are successful in getting the USDOT grant funding for implementing the Los Angeles Region Congestion-Reduction Demonstration Initiative, public outreach and marketing activities will be further refined and heavily focused on the corridors contained in the application. We will also conduct community outreach activities in preparation for the two anticipated public hearings that the California Transportation Commission will likely be organizing during June 2008 to fulfill one of the requirements for determining the eligibility of our application for the authority to develop and operate HOT lanes per Assembly Bill 1467 .

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Summary of Congestion Pricing Public Outreach Activities
- B. Congestion Pricing Fact Sheet
- C. High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane Projects Implemented in the United States
- D. Video Script for Los Angeles County Congestion Pricing Initiatives

Prepared by: Ashad Hamideh, Ph.D., Transportation Planning Manager
Regional Program Management

Carol Inge

Carol Inge
Chief Planning Officer

for Carol Inge

Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT A

SUMMARY OF CONGESTION PRICING PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The following is a summary of the public outreach activities that have already been implemented (as of February 15, 25 2008), as well as an overview of other ongoing and planned activities, related to the congestion pricing initiatives that are being considered in Los Angeles County.

Public Outreach Implemented- Elected Officials, Cities, and Agencies

- September 2007 - presentation to the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments.
- September 2007 - invitation to the region's Council of Governments (South Bay Cities, Las Virgenes/Malibu, San Gabriel Valley, Gateway Cities, Westside Cities, and Arroyo Verdugo) and the North County Transportation Coalition to attend the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Committee and to provide input to the workplan for the analysis of congestion pricing strategies for Los Angeles County.
- October 2007 - presentation made by Mr. Tyler Duvall, Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy (currently Acting Under-Secretary for Policy) in the Office of the Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to our Board and meeting held with transportation agency stakeholders.
- November 2007 - presentation to the Gateway Cities Council of Governments.
- November 2007 - presentation to federal, state, and legislative staff.
- December 2007 - conference call with the California Transportation Commission (CTC) regarding the application that we intent to submit by March 31, 2008 for the authority to develop and operate high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes per Assembly Bill 1467.
- December 2007 - conference call with the Office of the Speaker of the Assembly.
- December 2007 - presentation to the City of Los Angeles Transportation Commission.
- January 2008 - meeting with Congress Representatives Hilda Solis, Xavier Becerra, and Lucille Roybal-Allard at our headquarters.
- January 2008 - presentation to the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments.
- January 2008 - presentation to the South Bay Cities Council of Governments.
- February 2008 - conference call with the CTC.
- February 2008 - presentation to the San Gabriel Valley Public Works Technical Advisory Committee.

Public Outreach Implemented- General Public

- December 2007 - development of a Spanish-English website, which is available at: http://www.metro.net/projects_programs/congestion_reduction/congestion_reduction.htm.
- January 2008 - Live Chat with Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor.

Ongoing/ Planned Public Outreach Activities

- Individual briefings to State and Federal Offices of elected officials representing constituents living along freeway corridors that were identified as potential HOT lanes in the USDOT grant application.
- Development of a presentation package for individual briefings to cities located along the proposed HOT lane corridors in advance of first countywide stakeholder meeting.
- Preparation of education and marketing campaign, including branding, to emphasize the travel demand management component of the proposed HOT lane project and the benefits from expected changes in travel behavior.
- Preparation of multi-media platforms to assist in explaining how the proposed project will work to the general public.
- Preparation for a countywide stakeholder meeting for April 2008 to engage stakeholders in discussions for implementing the proposed HOT lane project and the general concept of congestion pricing as one of the options for reducing congestion in the region.
- Preparation of a workshop for elected officials and stakeholders on congestion pricing applications, in cooperation with the USDOT, for April/May 2008.
- Preparation and implementation of a Public Outreach and Marketing Plan during the period May 2008- April 2009 (pending contract award by our Board in April 2008).

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Fact Sheet on Congestion Pricing



Fact Sheet on Congestion Pricing

DEFINITION

Congestion pricing is the concept of charging for the use of a transportation facility such as a roadway, based on the level of traffic congestion. The greater the congestion, usually occurring during morning and evening rush hours, the higher the cost to use the facility. Pricing is one approach for efficiently managing roadway capacity by changing commuting behavior and generating additional funds for more transit, vanpools and other transportation improvements to increase mobility.

FORMS OF CONGESTION PRICING

Forms of congestion pricing are found in many types of businesses. Movie theater matinees, early-bird dinners in popular restaurants and free or bargain-rate phone calls on evenings and weekends are all examples of congestion pricing that are frequently cited. Similarly, the charging of tolls to travel on "Express Lanes" at peak-travel times is a form of congestion pricing.

CONGESTION COSTS AND PRICING BENEFITS


According to the 2000 Census, 70 percent of Los Angeles County commuters drive alone to work, and only 7 percent use transit. Nationwide, highway congestion has increased dramatically over the last 20 years. In 2003, highway congestion in the largest U.S. cities lasted 7 hours per day, up from 4.5 hours in 1982. Recent studies estimate that traffic congestion cost the U.S. economy \$65 billion annually, and the hardest industries hit are trucking, service and repair, wholesale trades, and construction. Often small businesses, the backbone of the economy, are hardest hit. According to the USDOT key congestion pricing benefits include reduction in delays and stress, an increase in the predictability of trip times, improvements to transit speeds and reliability of service, increases in transit ridership, reductions in fuel consumption and vehicle emissions, and increased revenues for funding transportation improvements.

APPLICATIONS OF CONGESTION PRICING ON U.S. ROADWAYS

San Diego, Seattle, Denver, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis and Houston have successfully converted freeway carpool lanes into "Express Lanes" (or HOT lanes), with solid results. In some of these areas, commuters' travel times have been cut in half.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CONGESTION REDUCTION INITIATIVES

(1) June, 2007 Metro Board Motion resulted in issuing on November 7, 2007 a Request for Proposal for a Congestion Pricing Operating Plan for Los Angeles County to implement by 2010 not less than three projects with congestion pricing components to manage current roadway resources and reduce congestion. This contract is expected to be considered for approval at the April 2008 Board meeting. (2) Pursuant to a USDOT solicitation, Metro, in partnership with Caltrans, SCAG and local transportation agencies submitted a proposal requesting a total of \$1.43 billion to integrate innovative transit strategies, new transportation technologies, and direct highway pricing for managing traffic congestion. The proposal includes a demonstration pilot project in which freeway carpool lanes on the



I-10 (El Monte Busway), I-110 (Harbor Freeway Transitway), and the I-210 (from the I-605 to the I-710) would be converted into "Express Lanes" where speeds of at least 45 to 50 miles-per-hour would be guaranteed. These two initiatives have mutual goals in pursuing feasible corridor plans for implementation. Until USDOT responds to the grant application, Metro will continue with the scope of the study originally conceived in the November 2007 Request for Proposal.

WHY CONSIDER PRICING AND HOW CAN IT BE EQUITABLE?

Congestion pricing provides another alternative to managing traffic flow which is growing increasingly worse. To fulfill our obligation to the people of Los Angeles County, Metro must consider reasonable options that may contribute to improving our mobility and quality of life. As with any complex issue, many factors contribute to identifying and implementing solutions. At least a few of these challenges include increased population, increased flow of material goods on roadways, more auto ownership and declining funding from gas tax revenue and state and federal governments.

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), survey results from currently operating toll projects in California and other parts of the country show that drivers of all income levels use priced lanes. Although many low-income users do not choose to use the tolled facility every day, they support having the option. Survey responses for San Diego's HOT lanes indicate that lower income users show a high level of support. Similarly, an evaluation of the State Route 91 Express Lanes shows that lower income drivers utilize the priced facilities and are as likely to approve the facilities as drivers with higher incomes. A 1997 SCAG study in the five county region concluded that all income quintiles, including low income groups, would experience a net increase in benefits under pricing.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Educating the public on this topic and its impacts and benefits is paramount. The topic of pricing needs to be understood as one of the measures available to transportation agencies to manage current resources and gain control of the spiraling and insidious negative impacts of roadway congestion. Metro and its partners are prepared to engage in an extensive public education and outreach program to gain public awareness of and support for congestion pricing. Efforts will focus on three groups: (1) Elected officials who will be directly involved in the decision making process, (2) Transportation Agency representatives on the federal, state and local levels who will be assembled into the Transportation Agency Advisory Group (TAAG) who will be charged with guiding the progress of the development of the Los Angeles County Operating Plan over the next year, and (3) Community Advisory Groups comprised of local residents, businesses, private vehicle users, transit users, environmental interests, social services, and academics. A well-defined education, outreach and marketing campaign will be developed by expert consultants to gauge public opinion towards the proposed initiatives.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

To learn more about Congestion Reduction Choices, visit www.metro.net/congestion.

HIGH OCCUPANCY TOLL (HOT) LANE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN THE UNITED STATES

| Location | Project Description | Corridor Length | Toll Rate Per Trip | Operating Year | Summary of Experiences |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------|--|----------------|---|
| I-15 San Diego California | Conversion of 2 existing HOV lanes to reversible HOT lanes | 8 miles | \$0.50 - \$4.00 (SOV) | 1996 | * All projects successful, with demonstrated benefits. * Encouraged carpooling. |
| I-25 Denver Colorado | Conversion of 2 existing reversible HOV Lanes to 2 reversible HOT lanes | 7 miles | \$0.50 - \$3.25 (SOV) | 2006 | * Increased transit use due to new service and enhanced trip reliability. |
| I-394 Minneapolis Minnesota | Conversion of 2 existing HOV lanes to 2 reversible HOT lanes Conversion of 2 existing HOV lanes to 2 concurrent HOT lanes | 3 miles 8 miles | \$0.25 - \$8.00 (SOV) | 2005 | * Average trip travel time savings of 10 - 30 minutes. * Increased vehicle and people throughput. * Higher and more stable speeds. |
| I-10 W Houston Texas | Conversion of 1 reversible HOV lane to 1 reversible HOT lane | 13 miles | \$2.00 (HOV 2 only) (SOV not allowed) | 1998 | * Support from commuters from all income groups. * Support from commuters traveling along the general purpose lanes and the managed lanes. |
| US 290 Houston Texas | Conversion of 1 reversible HOV lane to 1 reversible HOT lane | 14 miles | \$50/month (SOV) | 2000 | * Revenue cover operating expenses and surplus for corridor improvements. |
| I-15 Salt Lake City Utah | Conversion of 2 existing HOV lanes to 2 concurrent HOT lanes | 38 miles | \$1.20 - \$10.00 (SOV and HOV 2) (HOV 3 free, pay 50% EB 4:00- 6:00 PM) | 2006 | * Expansions considered, including developing regional HOT lane networks. |
| SR-91 Orange County California | Construction of 4 new HOT lanes | 10 miles | | 1995 | |

1. HOV = high occupancy vehicle; 2. SOV = single occupancy vehicle; 2. Toll rates set by periodic schedules or dynamically, except in Houston and Salt Lake City.

Voiceover

Imagery

Traffic in LA County is heading from bad to worse.

As in other major urban areas in the US, highway congestion lasts for seven or more hours each day here, increasing the length of the average rush hour drive by more than 37%.

Add that up another way: We spend eight workdays each year idling in traffic.

Everyone agrees we won't be building new freeways anytime soon; neither the money nor the public will be in place to do so.

So, is the glass half empty, or worse? Perhaps. But at Metro, our mission is to improve mobility for everyone in Southern California as soon as possible. So we're more determined than ever to find a solution.

Until we can build sufficient public transit options for all of us to enjoy – and these will take time to plan, build and fund – we need another solution *now* in order to fend off the creeping intrusion of congestion in our lives.

As we face the realities of life in LA today, Metro knows it's time to add new tactics to our plan. It's time to create more choices for commuters.

Open with footage of freeway traffic, endless into the distance.

Long line of cars waiting to get onto freeway.

Surface street; West LA; Close up on frustrated driver

Shot of unfinished freeway

People boarding bus or train with Metro sign in background

Construction at Expo line, though not identified as such

Planners in meeting; whiteboard with mobility options

Voiceover

Imagery

That's why Metro, in partnership with other local agencies, is exploring ways to make our roadways work better by managing the flow of traffic.

Moving traffic on freeway

One way to do this is called congestion pricing.

Moving type across screen; "Congestion Pricing"

Here's how it works. Some existing freeway carpool lanes are converted into "Express Lanes" where speeds of at least 45 to 50 miles per hour would be guaranteed.

Begin animation: Show lanes of freeway from above at angle; Highlight HOV lane; diamonds disappear, replaced by \$ sign or some such C.P. symbol

Guaranteed? Yes, because commuters – whether in carpools or driving alone – can opt to pay a fee to use these special lanes. The price of this newfound speed would vary, depending on the time of day or night drivers use the Express Lanes.

Now some cars in mixed-use lanes move over to Express Lanes, and move faster

During weekday rush hours, the fee would be highest... dropping during midday, nighttime and weekends when congestion is less severe. If lanes become too crowded to maintain the guaranteed speed, the price rises.

Clock appears to show time of day; in Express Lane, some way (\$ signs) to indicate price difference as more cars enter lane. Also, price drops as time of day changes

Vanpoolers and those riding on Express buses would be exempt from these fees, while enjoying faster travel times in the Express Lanes.

Vanpool and blue Express lane enter lane and speed up.

Voiceover

Imagery

Best of all for Express Lane customers, there won't be a need to slow down or stop at toll booths. Fees will be captured electronically.

And here's another benefit: Revenues from the fees will be used to fund local transit improvements in the corridors where pricing has been implemented. Traffic lights on major arterial streets feeding the freeways will also be synchronized to speed traffic flow.

So, will it work?

It's not a revolutionary idea. San Diego, Seattle, Denver, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis and Houston have successfully converted freeway carpool lanes, with solid results. In some of these areas, congestion pricing options have cut commuters' travel times in half. That includes people of all economic levels who have opted to use these Express Lanes as they need them.

Congestion pricing works because it gives individuals the option to travel faster. And with our freeways rapidly turning into parking lots, it's time we try new concepts.

Animation continues: Toll booth at freeway onramp disappears, and now cars enter Express Lanes without stopping

Photos or footage of construction projects...MGLEE, arterials and streetlights

Moving type: "Will it work?"

Map of US: animated highlight of cities mentioned

Moving type: "Travel times reduced by 50%"

Moving type: "Individual choice" over cars travelling rapidly

Voiceover

Imagery

In that spirit, Metro and Caltrans are embarking on a 12-month congestion pricing study in order to make informed recommendations for demonstration projects.

In addition, the two agencies have applied for federal grants.

The first phase of the joint study includes identifying opportunities to expand transit services.

We'll also implement technical improvements such as signal synchronization to manage the system

and convert existing freeway carpool lanes into toll lanes on the 210 freeway from the I-605 to the I-710, the San Bernardino Freeway along the El Monte Busway and I-110 Harbor Freeway Transitway.

In a later phase, additional corridors would be included for conversions.

Congestion has become so integrated into our lives that it seems overwhelming to change. But we really *can* change. If we work together using all of the strategies available to us, we can achieve a 10% congestion reduction. And for Los Angeles County, even 10% will have a huge impact on traffic flow.

People in meeting. Closeup of RIIITS screens. Maps of freeways, etc.

Type: "1. Identify transit opportunities"

Type: "2. Signal synchronization"

Type: "3. Convert carpool lanes to Express Lanes"

Congestion. Jammed city streets. Frustrated drivers.

Voiceover

Imagery

Metro knows there's no magic wand to reduce congestion in LA. Rather, a creative mix of transit service, ridesharing and new ways to keep our roadways moving are needed.

Different modes of transportation intercut.

Los Angeles is a global community. The world watches our high profile endeavors as we blend work, play and a magnificent cultural diversity into daily life.

Footage of "great" LA: culture, many kinds of people, lively street life, attractions, beach, blue sky, etc.

Metro's employees are part of this fascinating, rewarding and challenging region. We live, work and play here as well. That's why we're committed to finding solutions that will preserve what's best for LA County.

Metro operators, customer service, etc.

It's a daunting challenge. But as the saying goes, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Footage continues, with a very optimistic feel. Smiling faces, etc.

We know Congestion Pricing works. In fact, in every region of the US using the tactic now, congestion has been reduced.

Type on color: "It really works. Let's give it a try."

So we're ready to give it a try. After all, we're stuck in traffic, too.

Fade to black and Metro logo.