

Low-Income Toll Program Materials

Date	November 29, 2023
Subject	November 9 Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) Recap: Low-Income Toll Program

The following message was initially shared with EMAC members via email on November 14. Please note, the November 9 OTC presentation on the Low-Income Toll Program is included in this materials package.

At the November 9 OTC meeting, Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) members Phil Wu and Amanda Garcia-Snell opened the discussion on the low-income toll program (video starts at the [6:00:00 mark](#)). They reminded the commissioners about EMAC and OTC's work on Foundational Statements that have provided the direction for developing recommendations to address affordability and tolling, most notably through a low-income toll program.

EMAC members communicated their support for the following: percentage discount, opening the program residents of Oregon and Washington State, prioritizing efforts to boost enrollment, and a 50% to 75% discount for 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL). They communicated that more work should be done to deliver a 400% FPL benefit, establish partnerships with culturally responsive community-based organizations to help boost enrollment, tailor communications materials to specific audiences and needs, and establish partnerships with existing or new transportation services to "fill in the funding gap" for those most in need.

The OTC discussed EMAC's comments and received a [presentation](#) from ODOT on their recommendations (read [OTC packet for details](#)). The OTC communicated support for the following:

1. Commitment to implement a 50% discount for customers whose income is up to 200% FPL. Toll rates will be set after the final traffic and revenue analysis is complete in 2025.
2. Residents of Oregon and Washington State would be able to enroll.
3. The benefit would be offered as a percentage discount on each trip, as opposed to a monthly credit.
4. Commitment to study 10% and 25% discounts for 300% FPL and 400% FPL in further traffic and revenue studies. This further study and administration analysis would inform the OTC's decision to offer, or not, this option as a level in the program. This decision would be made in early 2025, with the possible implementation two to three years afterwards.

This direction would establish the country's most expansive low-income toll program. EMAC, ODOT, and OTC all shared that although these decisions were important, prioritizing enrollment efforts – to address the current low enrollment levels in low-income toll programs – is going to be essential work. ODOT will make high levels of enrollment in the program a key goal of its marketing efforts.

NOTE: All of these decisions are for tolling systems operated solely within Oregon. The Interstate Bridge Replacement Program will be decided through a bi-state process.

Next steps

EMAC will hold a public meeting on December 4 to discuss this and provide additional feedback to OTC and ODOT.

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On December 11 the OTC will approve a Toll Equity and Mitigation Report that is due to Governor Kotek by December 15. This report will memorialize this direction on the OTC.

Additionally, on December 11 the OTC will review the full set of toll draft rules, which identify the higher-level enrollment and verification steps of the low-income toll program. Input from this meeting will be used to prepare for an official public comment period and rules adoption process in early to mid-2024.