

I-5 and I-205 Toll Projects

Frequently Asked Questions



Q. WHY IS OREGON CONSIDERING TOLLING I-5 AND I-205 HIGHWAYS?

A. In 2017, the Oregon Legislature approved House Bill 2017, known as Keep Oregon Moving. This bill committed hundreds of millions of dollars to projects that will address congestion and improve the transportation system statewide. HB 2017 funded bottleneck relief highway projects, freight rail, transit improvements and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The bill also directed the Oregon Transportation Commission to pursue and implement tolling I-5 and I-205 in the Portland Metro region to provide additional traffic management tools to further manage congestion.

Q. WHAT PROBLEM WILL TOLLING HELP ADDRESS?

A. Tolling will address traffic congestion and mobility challenges in our region. Congestion impacts the economy through delayed movement of goods and services, and compromises reliability and travel time predictability for employers and employees. I-5 and I-205 carry the highest freight volume in the region and these major freight routes experience the highest level of congestion and unreliable travel time. Commuters, business travelers, freight haulers and others now struggle to plan consistent departure and arrival times. From 2015 to 2017 the population grew by 80,000 in the Portland region and drivers experienced a 13 percent increase in the hours of congestion. With projected population growth in the region, congestion will continue to grow. Tolling can help manage how this growth affects our transportation system.

Q. HOW WILL TOLLS HELP RELIEVE CONGESTION?

A. The use of variable rate tolls manages traffic flow and improves roadway efficiency by charging a higher price during peak traffic periods. The higher fee encourages some drivers to consider using other travel options, such as carpools or transit, or change their travel time to other, less congested times of the day. A small reduction in the number of vehicles on a road can significantly improve travel flow.

Q. WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF VARIABLE RATE TOLLING IN THE PORTLAND METRO AREA?

A. The purpose of tolling I-5 and I-205 is to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility for the region, especially for the trips that depend on the freeway for regional and longer distance travel. Project objectives also include creating a revenue source to help fund bottleneck relief projects. The State of Oregon is exploring tolling as part of a comprehensive approach to better manage congestion in the tri-county metropolitan area.

Q. WHAT IS VARIABLE RATE TOLLING OR CONGESTION PRICING?

A. The term variable rate tolling or congestion pricing describes a type of tolling that aims to improve mobility, travel times and reliability by charging a higher price during peak traffic periods. The higher fee, typically implemented along with transit improvements, encourages

some drivers to consider using other travel options such as carpools or transit, or change their travel time to other, less congested times of the day. If a small percentage of highway users choose another mode of travel or time of travel it can reduce traffic congestion for those who can't modify their trip and improve traffic flow for the entire system. Congestion pricing is a proven tool to manage congestion with approximately 40 pricing projects in operation across the country.

Q. WHERE ARE THE PROPOSED TOLLING LOCATIONS IN OREGON?

A. In 2018, regional stakeholders, agency partners, and the public explored options for tolling as part of a feasibility analysis. The early analysis identified two segments for further evaluation:

I-5 through central Portland: Tolling a seven-mile section would reduce congestion and provide travel time savings in one of the most severely congested corridors in the Portland metro area.

I-205 on or around the Abernethy Bridge in Clackamas County: Tolling this area could ease congestion and serve as a funding strategy for the planned widening and seismic strengthening of I-205 between Stafford Road and OR 213, including the Abernethy Bridge.

Further analysis is being conducted now to evaluate these segments and to determine the start and end points of tolling on I-5 and I-205.

Q. WHY DID THE PROCESS BEGIN ON I-5 AND I-205?

A. The Oregon Legislature designated I-5 and I-205 for the first study because they are the primary corridors for moving traded goods north and south through Oregon. Managing traffic congestion and mobility through tolling on these highways may result in the most benefit to the most travelers in the region as well as the statewide economy.

Q. WHEN WILL TOLLS BE IMPLEMENTED?

A. We are starting an environmental review and analysis for I-205 tolling in early 2020, with a final decision expected in 2022. Tolls could be implemented on I-205 as early as 2023. For I-5, we are initiating additional traffic and mobility analysis that will help identify where tolling would begin and end. We anticipate completing this initial analysis by 2021; the results of this analysis will inform the starting timeframe and alternatives for a formal environmental review process.

Q. WILL OTHER PORTLAND AREA HIGHWAYS BE CONSIDERED FOR TOLLING?

A. During the feasibility analysis, we frequently heard from stakeholders and the public an interest in considering tolling on the rest of the regional system. The OTC has expressed an interest in exploring further pricing locations. Such analysis would build on the continued work on I-5 and I-205.

There are other separate efforts to explore congestion pricing in the Portland metro region. Metro is leading a regional congestion pricing technical study to evaluate different regional

pricing scenarios and the City of Portland has a Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility project and convened a community task force to consider pricing options for equitable mobility.

Q. HOW ARE YOU ADDRESSING POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR FROM TOLLING?

We will engage low-income communities and communities of color to better understand community needs and concerns. We are working with local and national equity leaders to create a framework for development of the tolling projects that result in benefits for communities that have traditionally been disproportionately negatively impacted by transportation decisions. An Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) will start work in 2020 to help identify strategies to improve outcomes and access to travel choices for all demographics.

We will explore equitable strategies used in other parts of the country, including reduced or free transponders, cash payment options for un-banked individuals, rebates or discounts for different income levels, and integrating benefits between travel modes, such as transit passes that accumulate toll credits. Community engagement and the EMAC will provide critical input to these strategies.

Q. WITH TOLLING, WILL CONGESTION BE WORSE FOR NEARBY NEIGHBORHOODS?

A. Rerouting onto non-tolled surface streets could take place with drivers looking to avoid a toll. We also know that some drivers currently reroute to neighborhood streets to avoid congestion. As freeway travel becomes more reliable, and transit service more accessible, a positive result of variable rate tolling would be to reduce existing rerouting. Overall, the objective of variable rate tolling is to improve mobility by managing the freeway for freight and longer-distance trips so that surface streets can better serve shorter, local trips. The next phase of work will include additional analysis of rerouting and explore solutions in partnership with local agencies and governments.

Q. HOW MUCH WILL THE TOLLS COST?

A. Neither the price of tolls nor the exact times of day tolls may be in place have been determined. Those decisions will be based on a variety of factors and policy decisions considered in project development.

Q. WILL THERE BE TOLL BOOTHS TO COLLECT FEES?

A. No. Fees would be collected electronically so drivers do not have to stop. There are different methods used in tolling systems throughout the world, including the use of transponders, a device that collects fees electronically as you drive, and license plate recognition technology. The most appropriate technology for the Portland metropolitan area will be determined at a later stage. Options for individuals without bank accounts will be studied to provide access to all.

Q. HOW WILL ODOT USE THE REVENUE COLLECTED THROUGH TOLLING?

A. The Keep Oregon Moving legislation (House Bill 2017) established a Congestion Relief Fund which would receive any net proceeds from tolling. The Oregon Constitution (Article IX, Section 3a) specifies that revenues collected from the use or operation of motor vehicles is spent on roadway projects, which could include construction or reconstruction of travel lanes, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities or transit improvements in or along the roadway.

Q. WILL OUT-OF-STATE RESIDENTS HAVE TO PAY TOLLS IN OREGON?

A. The tolling projects being considered would apply to all drivers who use the highways during tolled periods, regardless of the state of residence, just as it is on other tolled facilities around the world.

Q. HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED AND HAVE MY SAY?

A. We want to ensure that many perspectives are heard to inform the development of both tolling projects. We will engage the public through events, questionnaires, open houses, advisory committees and working groups. To stay involved visit www.oregontolling.org to sign up to receive project notifications or provide comments. Questions can be submitted at any time to the ODOT project team at oregontolling@odot.state.or.us.

Q. WHERE CAN I OBTAIN UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION AND PROVIDE COMMENTS ABOUT TOLLING?

A. The latest information about the tolling projects is posted on the project website at www.oregontolling.org.

Si desea obtener información sobre este proyecto traducida al español, sírvase llamar al 503-731-4128.

Nếu quý vị muốn thông tin về dự án này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin gọi 503-731-4128.

Если вы хотите чтобы информация об этом проекте была переведена на русский язык, пожалуйста, звоните по телефону 503-731-4128.

如果您想瞭解這個項目，我們有提供繁體中文翻譯，請致電：503-731-4128。

如果您想了解这个项目，我们有提供简体中文翻译，请致电：503-731-4128。

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The information in this document, and the public and agency input received, may be adopted or incorporated by reference into a future environmental review process to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.