Oregon Toll Program

Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee

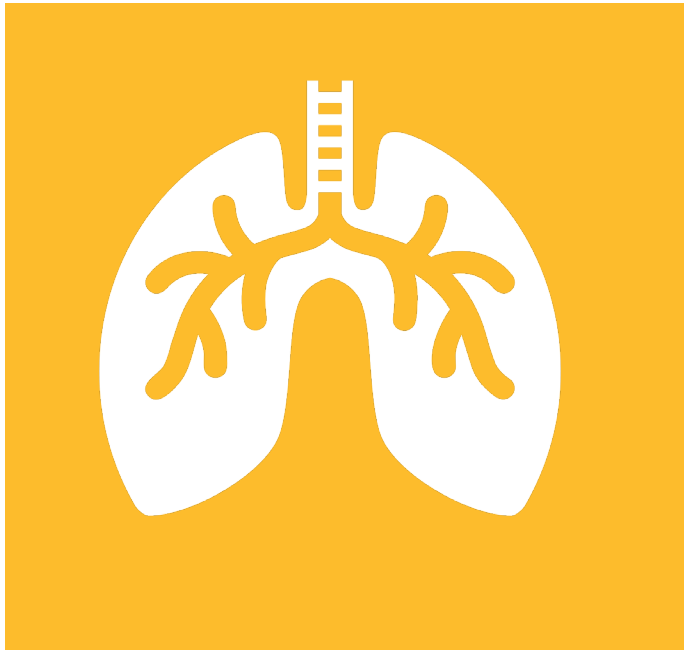
Facilitator: Jessica Stanton

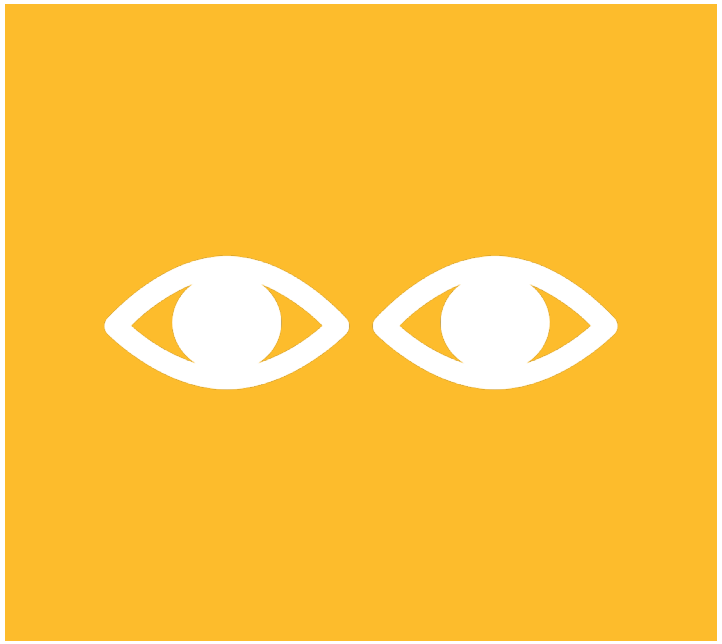
Pronouns: she/her

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Oregon Department of Transportation

Centering exercise





Welcome and technical Info

What you say is part of the public record and open to public records requests through the Oregon Public Records and Meetings Law.

We will post the minutes on the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee webpage at OregonTolling.org.

Tech help?

Contact Nick at
505-870-4449
Nick.Fazio@wsp.com

Working together agreements

Proposed Outcomes

- **EMAC to identify preferred policy and strategy options** for affordability
- **EMAC to provide feedback to ODOT on performance measures** and how they address affordability
- **EMAC to provide feedback to ODOT and EMAC Navigators** about the process for EMAC's recommendations to the Oregon Transportation Commission
- **EMAC to understand the status and opportunities for input** on the current toll projects

Agenda

1. Where we have been – where we are going
2. The meal: affordability policies and strategies
3. Performance measures and National Environmental Policy Act Scuba Team
4. The Navigators and developing EMAC's recommendations for the Oregon Transportation Commission
5. Toll project status update and opportunities for input
6. Closing

Where we have been
Where we are going

Jessica Stanton – Facilitator

EMAC Game Plan

Spring 2021

April – May
Transit + Multimodal

June – July
Health + Safety

August
Affordability + Transportation

Sept – Nov
EMAC OTC

DRAFT

FINAL

Toll Projects Process Equity

Toll Projects Outcome Equity

Equitable Policies

EMAC OTC

Equitable Policies

Toll Project Process and Outcome Equity

EMAC ODOT

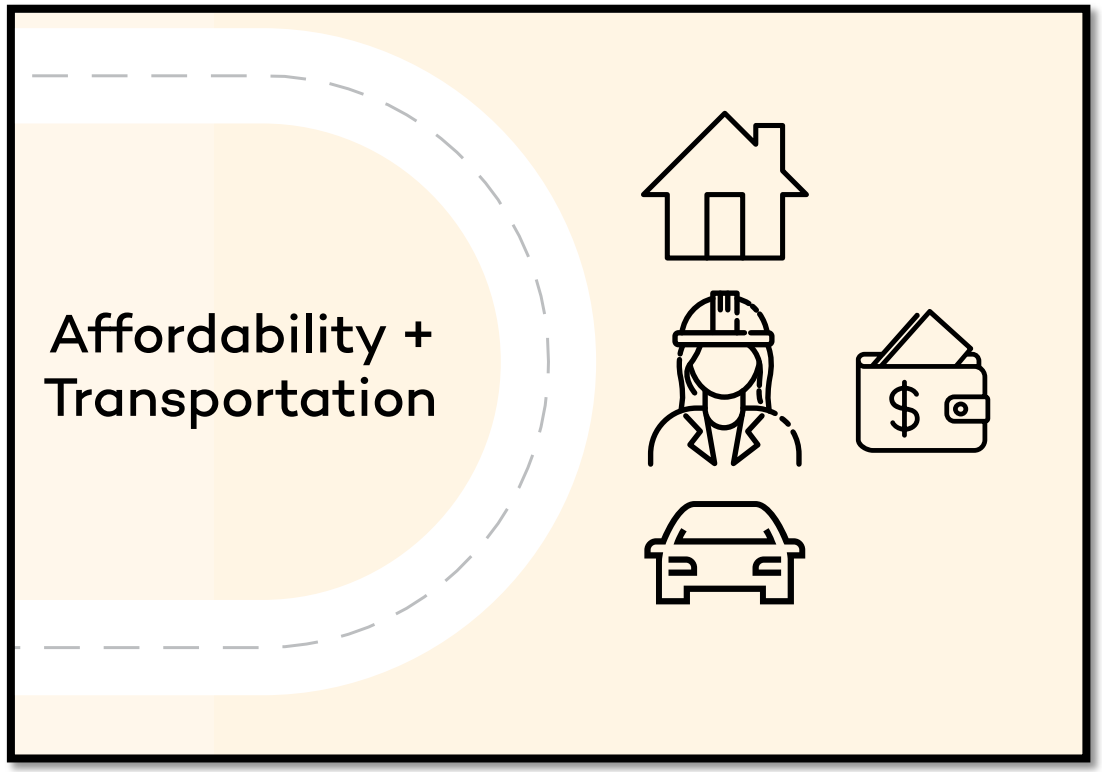
Spring 2022

EMAC is the leader

Today's meal: affordability

Garet Prior – ODOT

Chris Lepe – Project Team



Mise-en-place

- How is this advancing equity?
- Who is responsible and involved?
- Additional input from equity populations
- Path to implementation (cost, funding, construction, etc.)

Where will I see ODOT's commitment to affordability?

Crysalis

Adult Emerges

Adult

Strategies

Policies

Performance Measures
(informs mitigation)

Key elements of affordability

- Travel costs
- Financial barriers
- Small business
- Low-income (200% of the federal poverty level for the area)
- Environmental Justice (EJ) populations
- Economic disadvantage

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: EMAC POLICY & STRATEGY OPTIONS

August 25, 2021

DRAFT

I-205 Toll Project

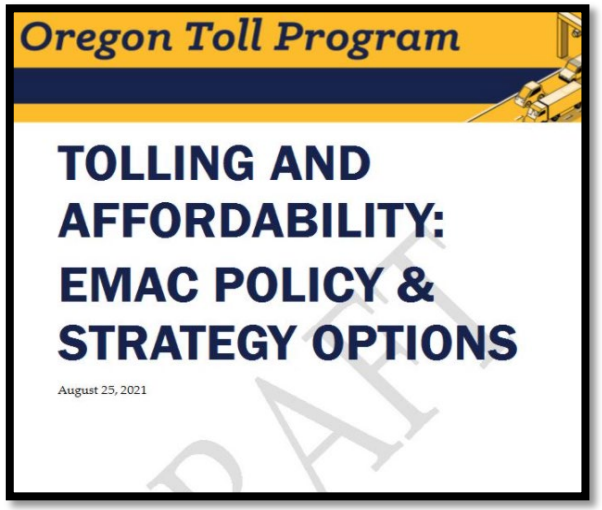
PERFORMANCE MEASURES: AFFORDABILITY

August 25, 2021

Crysalis

Strategies

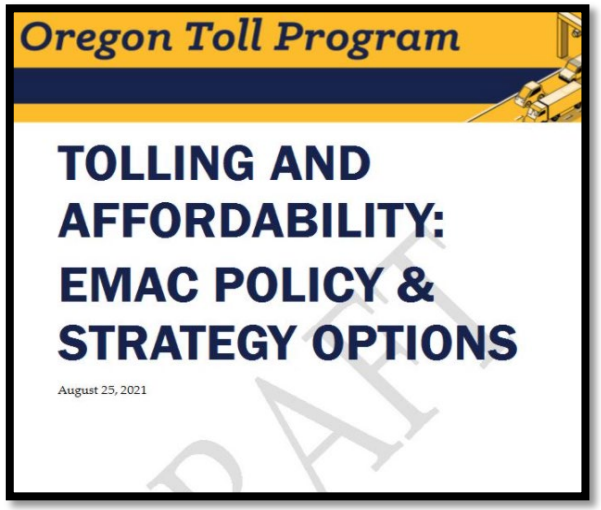
A strategy describes a process, or specific investment that is informed by the toll project analysis, but is above and beyond what is required mitigation.



Adult Emerges

Policies

A policy is a statement or administrative rule used to guide decisions and identify actions in pursuit of an outcome, such as advancing equity.



Discussion question #1

What is your reaction to the key takeaways in the research document?

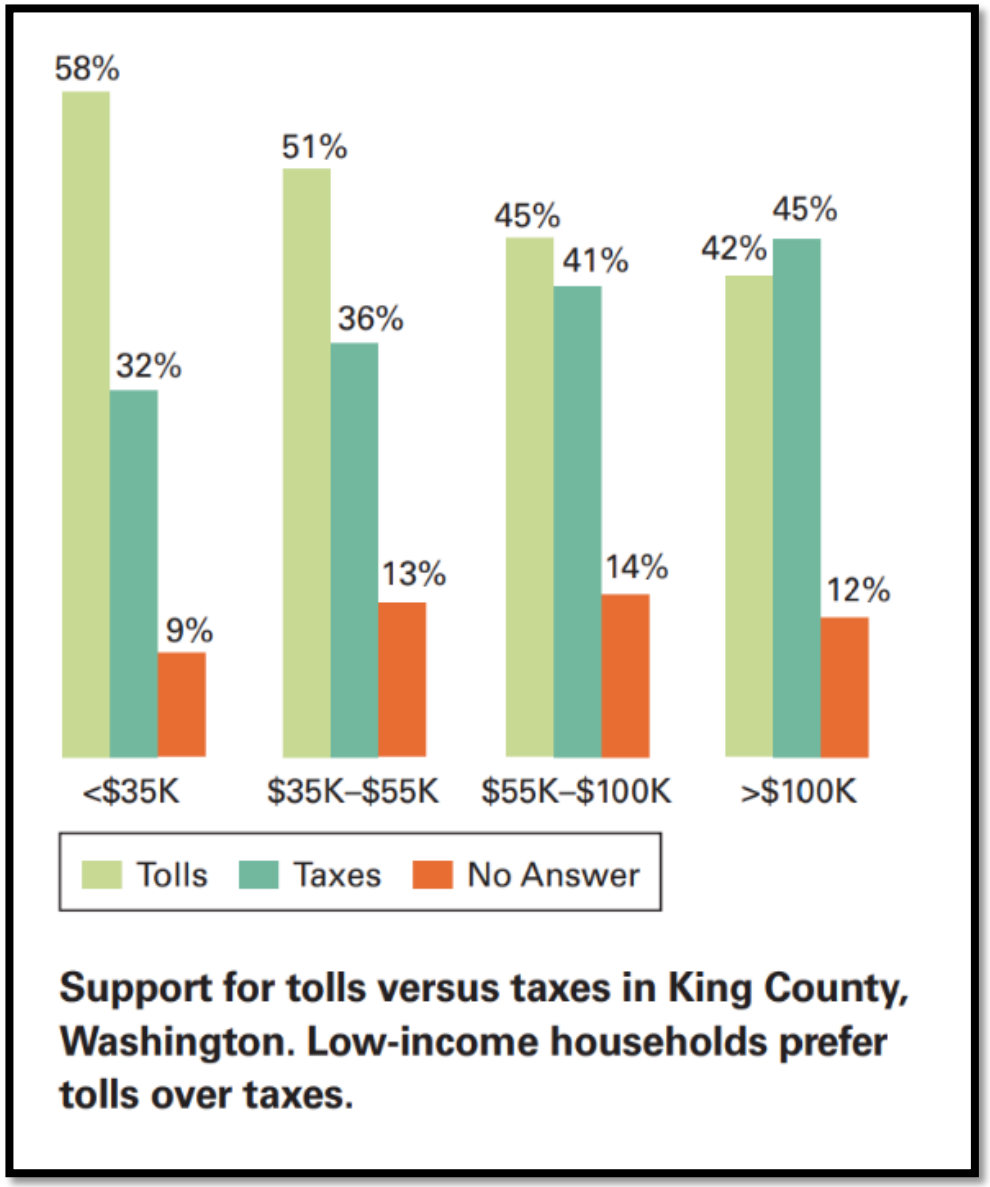
Key takeaway #1

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

Tolls could be a more equitable way of funding transportation, compared to the status quo.

To understand whether the toll program is advancing equity, analysis should identify the percentage of household income that lower income drivers will pay as compared to higher income drivers.



Support for tolls versus taxes in King County, Washington. Low-income households prefer tolls over taxes.

Figure 1. FHWA Primer: Income-Based Equity Impacts of Congestion Pricing (2008)

Key takeaway #2

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

People of all incomes travel at all times, but the research suggests that middle and higher income people are more likely to travel at the busiest times —and thus are more likely to pay congestion charges [tolls].

Key takeaway #3

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

The impact on workers who are receiving lower-pay is a concern.

Entry-level jobs may not be well served by public transit. Even if transit service exists, work hours are during off-peak times, making public transit use less appealing as an option. Many low wage workers need to drive to retain their jobs.

Key takeaway #4

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

Electronic payment can be a barrier.

Congestion pricing [tolls] relies on electronic cashless technology. Households that do not have credit cards, bank accounts, or cannot afford large deposits may be unable to set up toll accounts, which may limit their use.

Key takeaway #5

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

The cost and process to obtain a transponder can be a barrier.

Most tolled facilities that use electronic toll collection offer discounts to those who register and use transponders. This is to encourage people to join into the system and lower the cost to monitor and enforce toll fees.

Key takeaway #6

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

Tolling to support greater transit will help, but it will not solve it all.

"The fundamental issue is that spending toll revenue on transit—even buses—solves the wrong problem. Funneling revenue to transit does not address the fundamental concern that pricing harms poor drivers" (Small 2005).

Key takeaway #7

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

To address the financial impact to people and workers who are experiencing low-incomes, toll programs commonly offer credits and rebates

- Providing credits directly to an account
- Free transponders
- Credits once a certain number of trips are taken per month

Key takeaway #8

Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

The Oregon Legislature passed a law (HB 3055) that requires ODOT to develop a method for establishing income-based tolls.

Income-based exemptions or rates are not common in congestion pricing [tolls] projects, although there are a few studies underway. When considering exemptions, the tradeoff is that there will be less money for programs or investments to advance equity.

Key takeaway #9

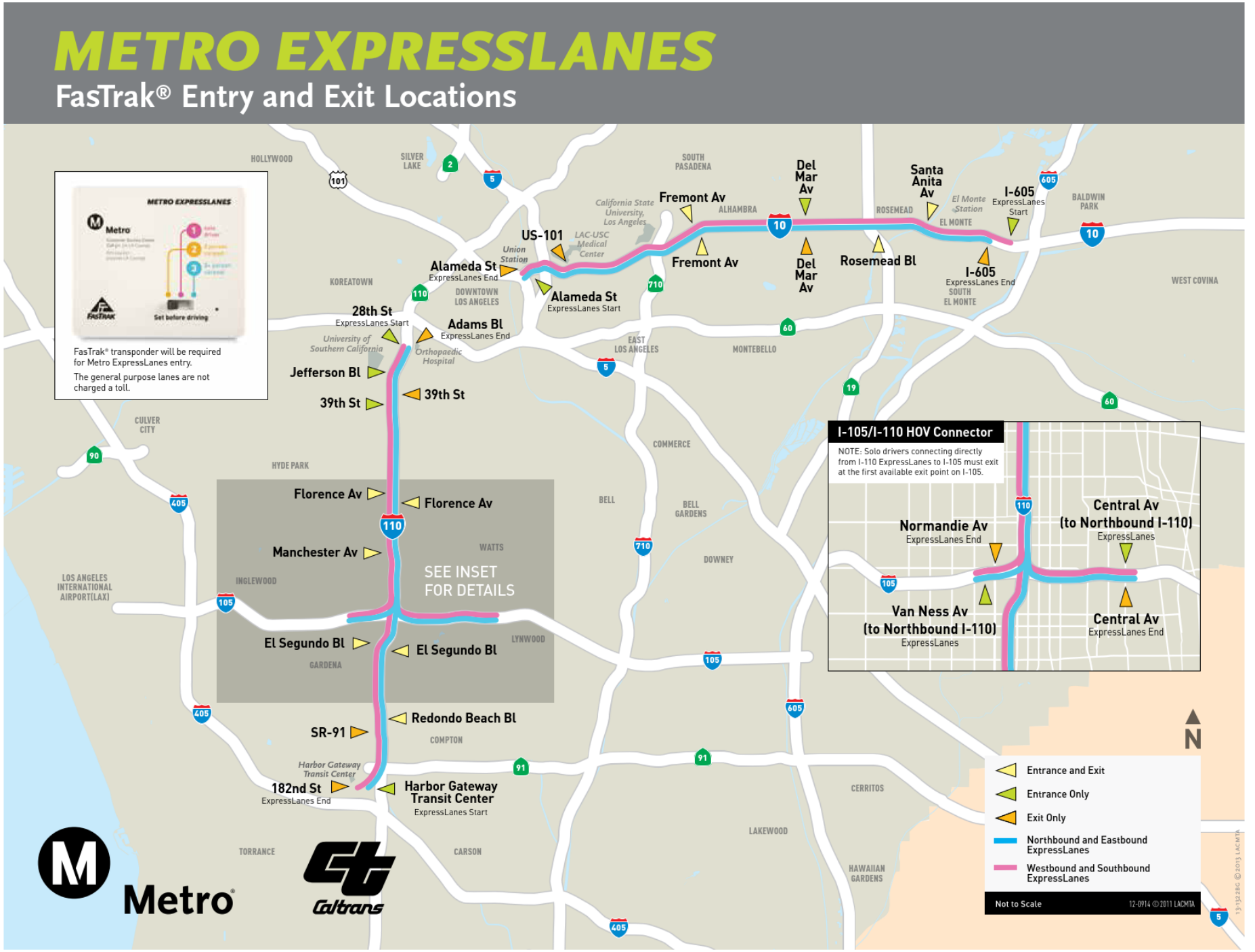
Oregon Toll Program

TOLLING AND AFFORDABILITY: RESEARCH

Offering cash options for payment and setting policies for the toll rate and enforcement are additional ways to address impacts.

- Offer additional time to pay a toll bill without incurring fines
- Establish toll rate price caps and floors for future rate setting

Los Angeles

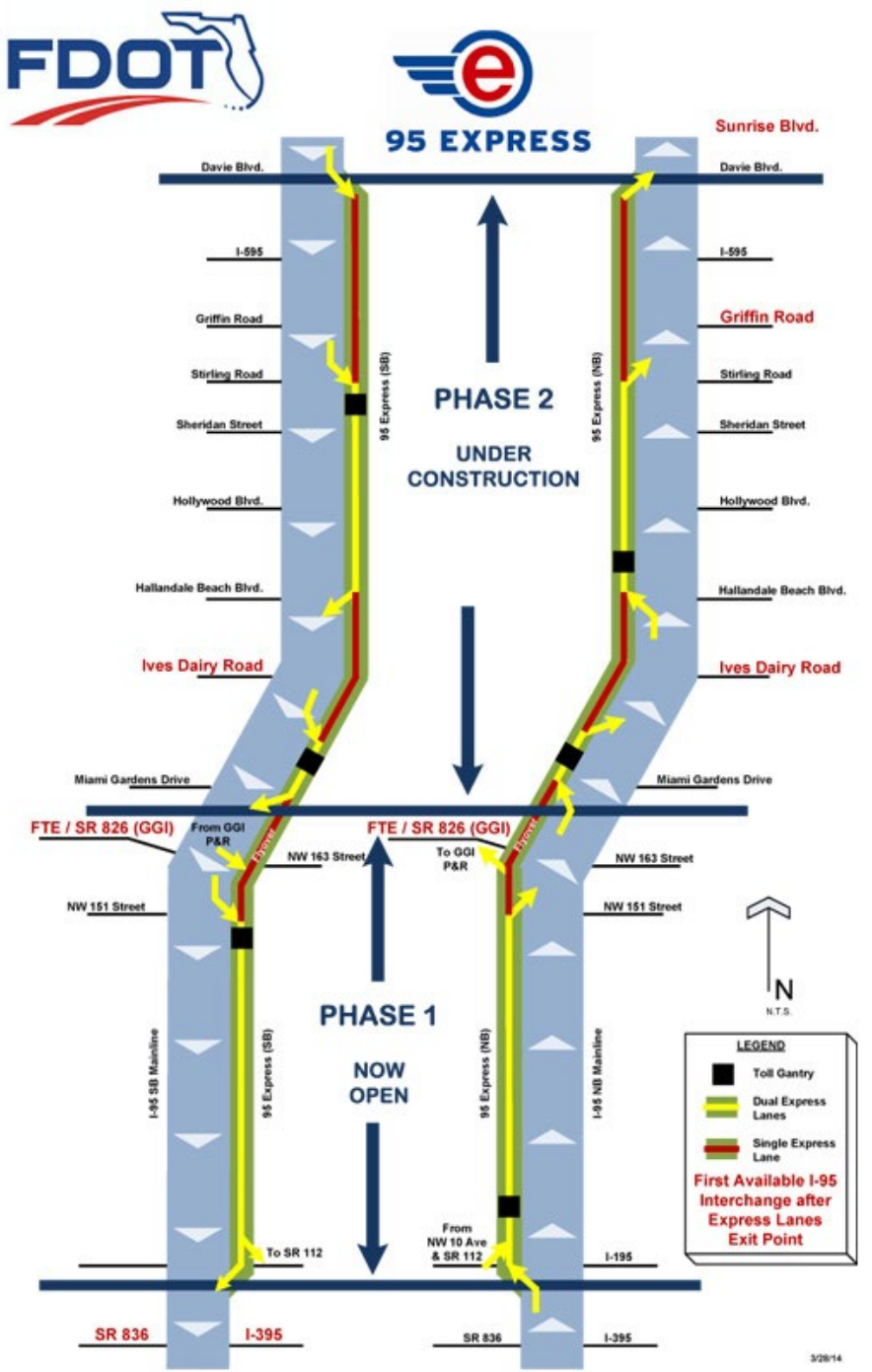

METRO EXPRESSLANES
FasTrak® Entry and Exit Locations
FasTrak® transponder will be required for Metro ExpressLanes entry.
The general purpose lanes are not charged a toll.
Set before driving
US-101
Alameda St
ExpressLanes End
Alameda St
ExpressLanes Start
Fremont Av
Fremont Av
Del Mar Av
Del Mar Av
Rosemead Bl
Santa Anita Av
I-605
ExpressLanes Start
I-605
ExpressLanes End
28th St
ExpressLanes Start
Adams Bl
ExpressLanes End
Jefferson Bl
39th St
39th St
Florence Av
Florence Av
Manchester Av
SEE INSET FOR DETAILS
El Segundo Bl
El Segundo Bl
Redondo Beach Bl
SR-91
182nd St
ExpressLanes End
Harbor Gateway Transit Center
ExpressLanes Start
I-105/I-110 HOV Connector
NOTE: Solo drivers connecting directly from I-110 ExpressLanes to I-105 must exit at the first available exit point on I-105.
Normandie Av
ExpressLanes End
Central Av
(to Northbound I-110)
ExpressLanes
Van Ness Av
(to Northbound I-110)
ExpressLanes
Central Av
ExpressLanes End
N
Entrance and Exit
Entrance Only
Exit Only
Northbound and Eastbound ExpressLanes
Westbound and Southbound ExpressLanes
Not to Scale
12-0914 © 2011 LACMTA
Metro
Caltrans

Los Angeles

Tolling and transit provider is the same agency (LA Metro)

- Low-Income Assistance Plan: Qualifying LA County residents can receive a one-time $25 credit when opening a FasTrak account
- Credit can be applied to transponder deposit or pre-paid toll deposit. $1 monthly account maintenance fee is also waived.
- Transit Rewards Program: Frequent transit riders and FasTrak account holders can earn a $5 toll credit after 16 one-way trips are made during peak hours

Miami


FDOT
95 EXPRESS
Sunrise Blvd.
Davie Blvd.
I-595
Griffin Road
Stirling Road
Sheridan Street
Hollywood Blvd.
Hallandale Beach Blvd.
Ives Dairy Road
Miami Gardens Drive
FTE / SR 826 (GGI)
From GGI P&R
To GGI P&R
NW 163 Street
NW 151 Street
95 Express (SB)
95 Express (NB)
PHASE 2
UNDER CONSTRUCTION
PHASE 1
NOW OPEN
I-95 SB Mainline
I-95 NB Mainline
To SR 112
From NW 10 Ave & SR 112
SR 836
I-395
N
N.T.S.
LEGEND
Toll Gantry
Dual Express Lanes
Single Express Lane
First Available I-95 Interchange after Express Lanes Exit Point
3/28/14

Miami

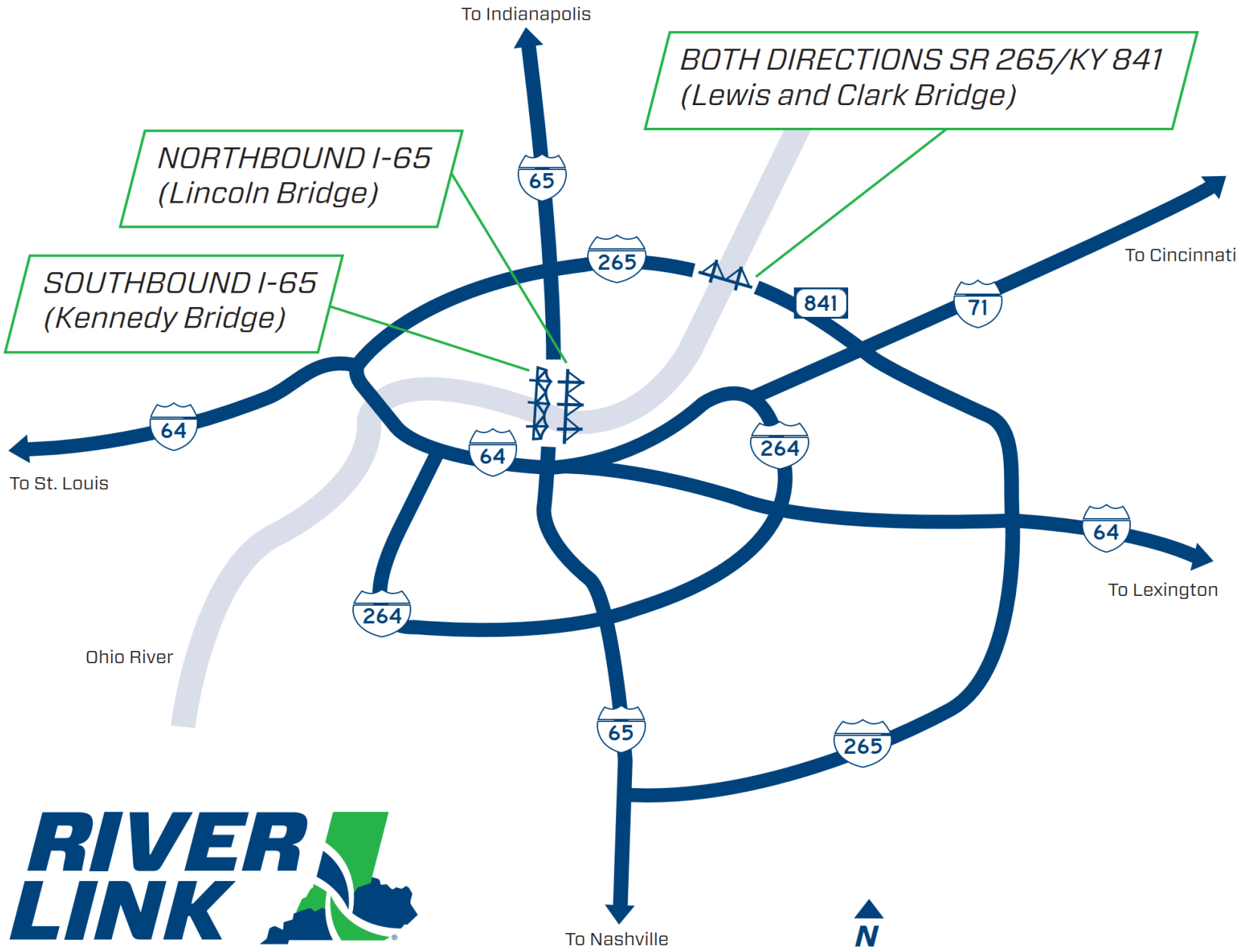
- SunPass transponder at $4.99 was essentially free as it came with $4.99 in value for payment of tolls
- Transponders can be replenished with cash at nearly 5,000 retail locations across the state

Hampton Roads

Hampton Roads

- Local residents receive a $0.75 discount per transaction after the 18th transaction in a month
- No EZ Pass minimum balance required

Louisville



RIVER LINK

Louisville

- Completed an assessment of the economic impact of tolling and possible strategies to address impacts
- Analysis found that collection of tolls and investment in transit would be more supportive than an income-based toll exemption

Discussion question #2

Based on your knowledge of your community and the research, are these the policy or strategy options that should be advanced by EMAC? How can they be strengthened? What's missing?

Policy options

Toll project analysis and development of an equitable toll program

- Analyze impacts to affordability by percentage of household income
- Analyze the tradeoffs between exemptions, credits, or discounted rates based on income versus collecting the toll revenues and investing them into equity and mobility strategies.
- When establishing the definition for “low-income” for the income-based toll rate, include a range that encompasses more than the federal definition for poverty

Policy options

Toll rate setting and future oversight

- ODOT should implement an income-based toll program that is progressive in nature; meaning, that higher income drivers will pay a larger share or percentage of household income than lower income drivers
- ODOT will produce annual reports for the Oregon Transportation Commission on a set of measures that track the progress of policies and strategic-investments

Policy options

Toll rate setting and future oversight

- When setting the toll rates, consider setting price caps on increases to the lower-income toll rate and/or build into the system where voices from Equity Framework identified communities are included in the decision-making process
- Establish a monitoring and communications system to understand whether the actions taken to address affordability in the planning stage are actually reaching the needs of low-income drivers
- Ensure that people experiencing low income who struggle to meet basic needs will have a path forward to travel toll-free.

Policy options

Geography-based toll rates

- Provide a credit system or discounted rate to lower-income drivers who are local residents of the I-205 area in the time between when I-205 tolling starts and the regional I-5 and I-205 toll system (Regional Mobility Pricing Project) comes online

Strategy options

Design a toll system that recognizes historic and current barriers and plans to address them

- Provide a cash-based option for paying tolls
- Offer additional time to pay a toll bill without incurring fines.
- Design the system to be clear and easy to use for everyone, including non-English language speakers

Strategy options

Design a toll system that recognizes historic and current barriers and plans to address them

- Transponders should be free or should come pre-loaded with credits to cover the cost of the purchase
- Set a no- or low-minimum balance requirement for loading or maintaining transponders
- Design and implement an interoperable system to accept transactions from transit, parking, and other modes of travel

Strategy options

Be specific about transit investments with toll revenue

- Funneling revenue to transit does not address the fundamental concern that pricing harms poor drivers
- Transit investments should be informed by identified needs and strengths of Equity Framework identified communities

Breakout room discussion

Discussion questions

1. What is your reaction to the key takeaways in the research document?
2. Based on your knowledge of your community and the research, are these the policy or strategy options that should be advanced by EMAC? How can they be strengthened? What's missing?

Mise-en-place

Do we have the right ingredients (policy and strategy options) at the table?

Breakout room recap and preferred options

EMAC report out from groups

Poll: How close is EMAC on a recommendation for affordability strategies and policies?

0-20% / 20-40% / 40-60% / 60-80% / 80-100%

EMAC Scuba Team update

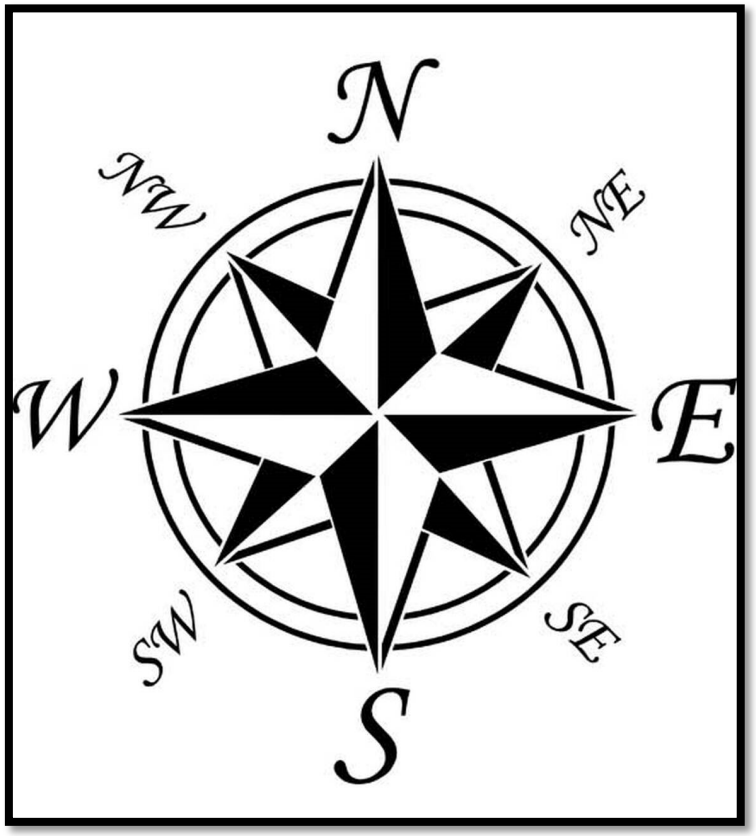
EMAC Scuba Team Feedback

- “Best professional judgement” should include more people than the ODOT project team
- Define terms (i.e. travel costs) and provide examples of what the data will look like
- Make sure the elements listed in the Equity Framework (Step #3) are used in the analysis

EMAC action

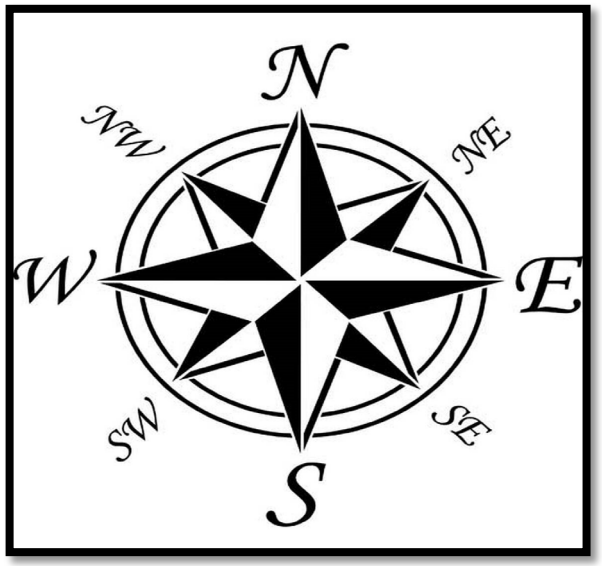
- Please review the comments and questions raised by the NEPA Scuba Team and contact Garet Prior, garet.prior@odot.state.or.us with additional feedback by September 1
- ODOT will develop a response to these comments by the September EMAC meeting

EMAC Navigators update



Navigators feedback

- Explain more about “why” this work is being done
- Be clear that extending benefits to people in Washington is included
- Indicate who has decision-making power for policies and strategies
- EMAC Navigators to work with ODOT on community engagement next steps



EMAC [DRAFT] RECOMMENDATION TO THE OREGON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DRAFT

EMAC Action

- Please review the comments and questions raised by the Navigators and contact Garet Prior, garet.prior@odot.state.or.us with additional feedback by September 1
- ODOT work to support the EMAC Navigators in updating this document for the September EMAC meeting

EMAC [DRAFT] RECOMMENDATION TO THE OREGON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Toll projects: status update and input

Regional Mobility Pricing Project

Equity

Climate Change

Congestion

Safety

Reliable Funding

KEY DECISION: Goals and alternatives for the analysis (Purpose & Need Statement)

Timing: Early 2022

How to get involved?

- Briefings
- Small group conversations with community engagement liaisons
- Presentations to community-based organizations, businesses, and elected boards/commissions
- Regional workshops (September-October)

I-205 Toll Project

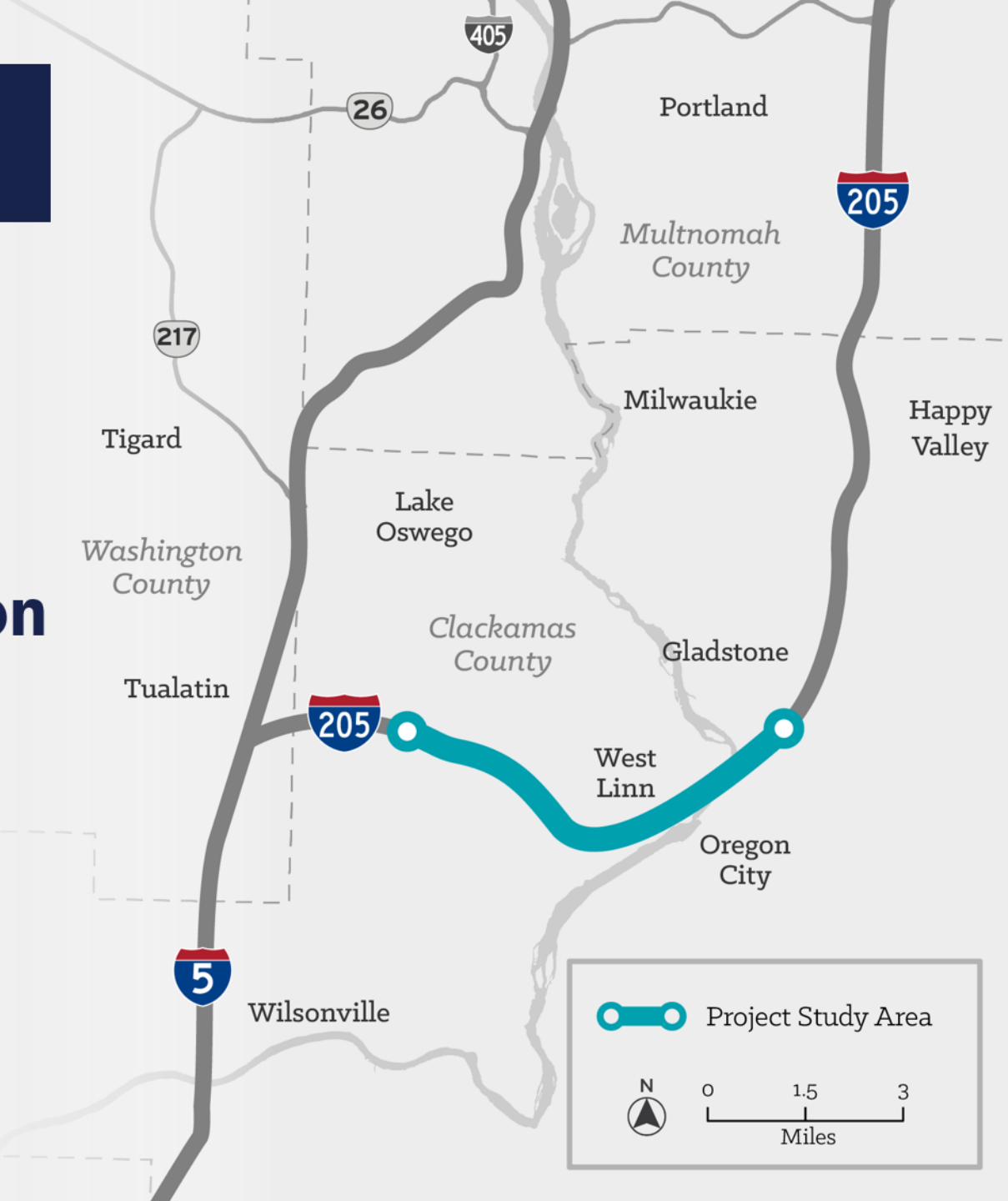
Equity

Climate Change

Congestion

Safety

Reliable Funding



KEY DECISION: Analysis of the impacts and project investments (mitigation)

Timing: Early 2022

How to get involved?

- Outreach specific to local residents, businesses, and people in the impacted areas
- Small group conversations with community engagement liaisons
- Regular coordination with local governments

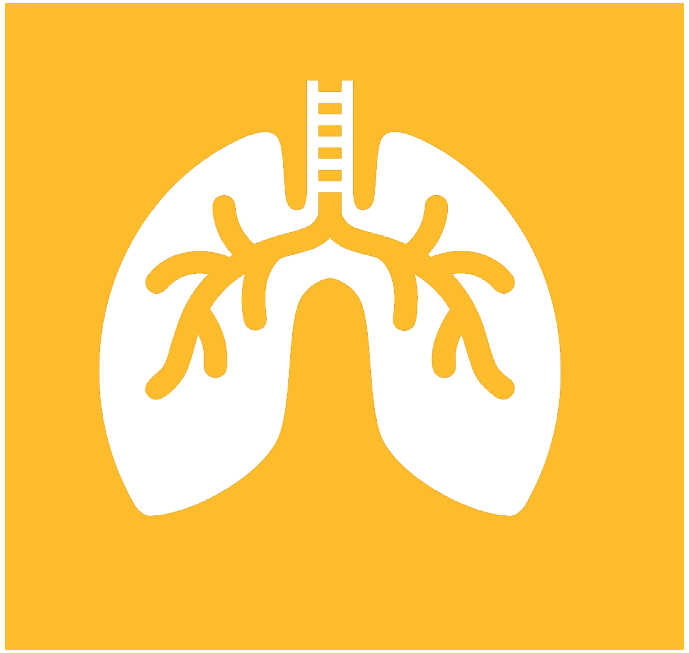
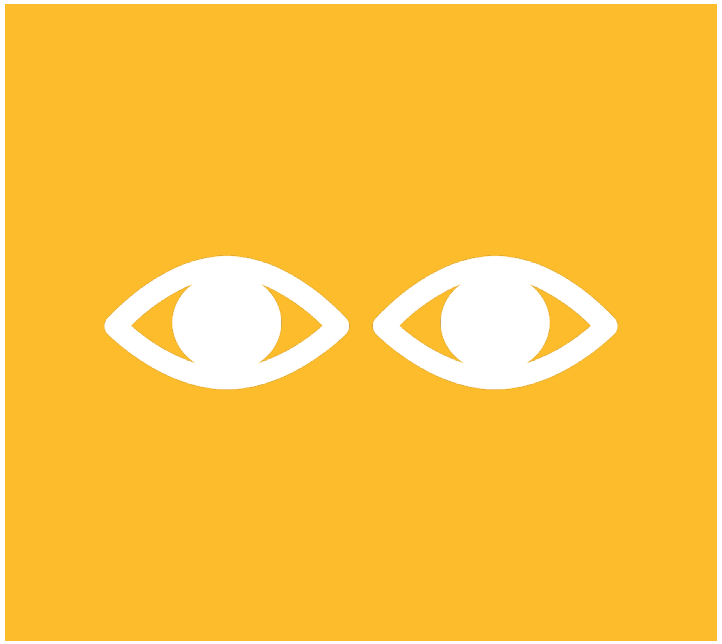
EMAC Action

- Do you have any questions about the current status and opportunities for input on the toll projects?
- ODOT will provide space at the September EMAC meeting for discussion on the toll projects

Closing

Jessica Stanton – Facilitator

Next steps

1. Please complete the meeting evaluation
2. September meetings for the NEPA Scuba Team and Navigators
3. Next EMAC meeting on September 22 at 3:30pm – developing the EMAC recommendation to the Oregon Transportation Commission

Thank you!