

NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH AND SAFETY: POLICY & STRATEGY OPTIONS

July 28, 2021

The purpose of this working document is to capture the current status and history of the Oregon Toll Program's Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) in developing neighborhood health and safety policy and strategy recommendations for the Oregon Transportation Commission.

On June 23, 2021, the EMAC held a worksession to review research on how tolling projects in the United States have addressed neighborhood health and safety impacts as well as research on the connection between transportation and health ([Neighborhood Health and Safety Research](#)). Based on this understanding, EMAC discussed [draft options for policy and strategy actions](#). **Input from that meeting is captured in this document** as well as an updated list of policy and strategy options for EMAC to consider at their meeting on July 28, 2021.

NEXT STEPS

At the July 28, 2021 meeting, ODOT will ask for support from EMAC to identify a list of preferred policy and strategy options for neighborhood health and safety. ODOT will then take the next step by gathering additional information requested by EMAC to help inform their development of a recommendation for the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC).

Neighborhood health and safety will be further discussed at EMAC's meeting in September to prepare a recommendation for the OTC in November 2021.

EMAC'S PREFERRED POLICY AND STRATEGY OPTIONS TO ADDRESS NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH AND SAFETY

Dedicate (%) of toll revenues or (\$) annually to address diversion off of the highway created by tolling, especially for communities identified in the Equity Framework. Investments would address the following health and safety needs:

- **Access to human needs: providing (or inhibiting) access to means of livelihood (e.g., jobs), essential goods (e.g., food, fuel and water), and essential services (e.g. health care, mental health services health promoting activities, and education)**
- **Neighborhood livability: facilitating movement of people and goods, physical activity, and social engagement, and limiting crime and disorder in one's immediate neighborhood surroundings**
- **Safety: preventing injuries and fatalities in the transportation system**
- **Environmental quality: preventing emissions of environmental pollution (noise, air, water) related to system operation and associated health impacts**

Dedicate (%) of toll revenues or (\$) annually to Community Based Organizations to invest in programs or projects that improve neighborhood health, local/small businesses, address impacts of climate change, or improve safety.

Provide credits, exemptions, or discounts for public emergency response vehicles, non-emergency medical transportation, and to support social service or non-profit health organizations recruit and retain volunteer drivers.

Provide credits, exemptions, or discounts for drivers who are people experiencing low-income.

Define the corridor for investment of toll revenues to follow the impact of the project, and not be set as a specific distance from the highway (for example, one mile). The needs of communities identified in the Equity Framework may be further from the highway.

Provide investments on or before day one. Investments should go further than reducing or avoiding impacts to advance equity.

Improve the Oregon Toll Program’s impact on health and safety through the development of the toll project environmental review process that complete the following actions:

- **Design the toll system to lessen congestion on the highways to improve the lives of those living near or traveling on them, which are disproportionately people from Equity Framework-identified communities.**
- **Analyze the benefits to neighborhood health and safety to determine what investments are advancing equity, not just maintaining the status quo.**
- **Provide detail about local air quality monitoring and conditions, which is beyond a look at the regional impact.**
- **Take additional steps than what is traditionally measured in the federal review process to connect transportation planning to health outcomes; integrate a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) or elements of an HIA into the process.**

PROCESS FOR COMMITMENTS FOR EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

We are at the start of an environmental review and public engagement process that will continue for multiple years (ending 2024). Key decision points along the way for neighborhood health and safety options will occur.

Essential next steps

The following information will be developed by ODOT in coordination with EMAC following the EMAC's discussions on neighborhood health and safety in June and July:

- Engagement with Equity Framework-identified communities.
- Better understanding from ODOT about the range of funding that would be available for neighborhood health and safety investments, and how ODOT could deliver on commitments to services or programs with respect to the Oregon constitutional restriction or in Washington.
- Describe the process within ODOT or in coordination with partners to deliver investments that advance equity that are not directly funded by toll revenue.
- Technical modeling and analysis from ODOT about tolling benefits and burdens on Equity Framework-identified communities and how policies and strategies could address impacts and advance equity (early 2022 for I-205 Toll Project and early 2023 for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project).
- Technical and financial analysis that would identify how much funding is available for neighborhood health and safety investments, outside of what is required to be paid for first (early 2023 for I-205 Toll Project and early 2024 for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project).

NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKSHOP – JUNE 23, 2021

On June 23, 2021, the EMAC held a work session to review research on how tolling projects in the United States have addressed neighborhood health and safety impacts as well as research on the connection between transportation and health ([Neighborhood Health and Safety Research](#)). Input from that meeting is captured in this document (What We Heard).

WHAT WE HEARD

Support for dedication of toll revenue to address diversion.

- Toll revenues allocated for active transportation will provide healthier options for travel.
- Need to identify what is an “acceptable” amount of diversion. How much diversion is being modeled?
- Need to identify how far from I-205 diversion will be modeled and improvements will be considered.
- Need a better definition of diversion and associated impacts.

Be specific about revenue dedication.

- Identify whether revenue dedication is from gross or net revenue.
- Toll revenue needs to address climate and health impacts.
- Need to prioritize who benefits from these revenues.

Work with Community Based Organizations that serve the impacted communities.

- Consider CBOs inside and outside the project area.

Address the following concerns:

- Add policy language that address the public concern that side streets will be overwhelmed. Some diversion is already happening; how is the project looking across the whole system?
- Need to consider what impacts come first. If we can strengthen communities before, impacts will be reduced before tolling is in place.
- Consider impacts to small businesses and local/small commercial delivery trucks.
- Is freight diversion a concern?
- Be specific about how diversion is being addressed, such as enhancing transit.
- Need to identify how funding will be distributed to transit agencies.

WHAT WE HEARD

Support for exemptions for public emergency vehicles and non-emergency medical transportation.

- Include an exemption for social service and non-profit agencies that don't charge a fare.
- Include an exemption for volunteer drivers (meals on wheels, etc.) from Oregon and Washington.

Need an exemption for low-income drivers.

- Low-income drivers should be exempt, not reimbursed.

Consider impacts to individuals and Equity Framework-identified communities outside the project area.

- Consider economic and health impacts of those that live outside the area.

More information is needed on how health and climate impacts will be addressed.

- Toll revenue and project design should be used to reduce climate/health impacts.
- More specificity is needed around air quality monitoring.
- A health impact assessment can bring communities information on health impacts.
- How do we go above and beyond what is required in the National Environmental Policy Act?
- Need to reduce climate change drivers and identify co-benefits.

Need to make a better connection to the trauma-informed approach.

Need to consider impacts to mental health.

- Lack of access to travel options, increased stress, increased financial burden from tolls, or rerouting to avoid tolls all can impact mental health.

There needs to be a net benefit to health and safety.

- One case study found an increase in traffic volume while safety remained stable. Need to see a decrease in crashes and an increase in safety – not just status quo.
- Improving congestion can be a benefit to Equity Framework-identified communities.
- Positive example in Los Angeles revenue commitments.