

## Key Terms and Definitions

### **Congestion Pricing (Variable Rate Tolling)**

The term "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. This concept is also known as variable rate tolling. The higher fee—typically implemented along with transit and other multimodal 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, or not make the trip at all. When 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.

### **Economic Disadvantage**

Individuals and communities with significantly less wealth and financial resources and whose economic health and wellbeing has been impaired due to systemic barriers (such as limited access to opportunities, through discrimination in education, or health care, hiring and promotions, lack of banking and credit or other factors) as compared to other people or communities in the same region. Appendix A in the Equity Framework includes a written example of someone experiencing economic disadvantage.<sup>1</sup>

### **Environmental Justice (EJ)**

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development; implementation; and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EJ at the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) means promoting the principles of EJ (as embodied in Executive Order 12898) through the incorporation of those principles in all USDOT and FHWA programs, policies, and activities, and identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse effects of the agency's programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations to achieve an equitable distribution of benefits and burdens.

Environmental Justice (EJ) populations include individuals who are African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Native American and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, of two or more races, and/or low-income.

### **Equity**

Equity acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity is the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers

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<sup>1</sup> I-205 and I-5 Toll Projects' Equity Framework, Updated December 3, 2020.  
[https://www.oregon.gov/odot/tolling/Documents/Toll\\_Projects\\_Equity\\_Framework\\_with\\_AppendixA.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/odot/tolling/Documents/Toll_Projects_Equity_Framework_with_AppendixA.pdf)

communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities.<sup>2</sup>

### **Equity Framework<sup>3</sup> Communities**

The Oregon Toll Program recognizes past land-use and transportation investments in the Portland metro area—including highway investments—have resulted in negative cultural, health, economic, and relational impacts to local communities and populations. These projects have resulted in displacement and segregation and have disproportionately affected: people experiencing low-income or economic disadvantage; Black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC); older adults and children; persons who speak non-English languages, especially those with limited English proficiency; persons living with a disability; and other populations and communities historically excluded and underserved by transportation projects.

### **Diversions**

A broad term referring to changes in travel behavior that occurs where a travel condition changes, such as traffic congestion or a toll. Diversion can include users choosing to change their travel time, travel mode, trip destination, travel route, or frequency of travel for existing or expected trips. This term is not to be confused with rerouting, which is one type of trip diversion.

### **Leakage**

When a portion or all of the toll is never collected due to system errors, the inability to identify the toll customer (e.g., vehicles not identified because of a license-plate image processing or transponder error), or the inability to collect payment from the customer (e.g., the invoice for a toll bill by mail is repeatedly ignored).

### **Mitigation**

Mitigation is a term defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It refers to actions to address negative impacts identified in the environmental analysis for a project. A mitigation can be a specific project or investment or be a general statement that describes how ODOT will work toward a solution in the future. A mitigation investment or strategy tied to a toll project environmental analysis must be related to an identified negative impact. ODOT is required to implement identified mitigation under NEPA.

### **Mode Shift**

A change in travel behavior where a trip is made using a different mode of transportation (e.g., a decision to use public transit instead of driving or a decision to carpool instead of driving alone).

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<sup>2</sup> "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan." State of Oregon (2021). Originally adopted in June 2020 for the State of Oregon Equity Framework in COVID-19 Response and Recovery.

<sup>3</sup> I-205 and I-5 Toll Projects' Equity Framework, Updated December 3, 2020.

[https://www.oregon.gov/odot/tolling/Documents/Toll\\_Projects\\_Equity\\_Framework\\_with\\_AppendixA.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/odot/tolling/Documents/Toll_Projects_Equity_Framework_with_AppendixA.pdf)

### **National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions for federal lands or federal facilities. Using the NEPA process, agencies evaluate the environmental and related social and economic effects of their proposed actions. Agencies also provide opportunities for public review and comment on those evaluations.<sup>4</sup>

### **Net Toll Revenue**

When construction projects are paid for with loans (i.e. “bonded”), certain financial obligations must be met before discretionary spending may occur. Net revenues after such obligations should be targeted to meet statewide goals and meet all federal requirements, and those identified in Oregon’s constitution, and elsewhere as appropriate.

### **Rerouting**

A change in travel behavior where a vehicle trip route changes in response to congestion or tolling. Rerouting is the specific term to be used for vehicles using alternative (non-tolled) routes instead of a tolled highway.

### **Toll**

A toll is a user fee. In this context, a fee imposed to drive on a road or bridge. Bridge tolls and roadway tolls have been used for centuries mostly to pay for construction and maintenance of the facility. Historically, travelers had to stop and pay a flat fee in cash to use the bridge or road. Often, large trucks paid a higher toll, but every driver paid the same amount regardless of time of day.

### **Toll Credits**

Credits are usually in dollars, but also can be for a specific number of tolled trips. They are deposited into the toll system account of a driver. As an example, credits could be given for using transit a certain number of times during peak hours, or for persons with income below a defined level.

### **Toll Discounts**

Reductions in the amount of the toll that would normally be charged to a vehicle traveling on a given facility at a given time. Under a discount, the driver would still pay a portion of the toll. Discounts could be given based on auto occupancy, vehicle type, or potentially to accounts of low-income drivers particularly if a low-income credit is not offered.

### **Traffic and Revenue (T&R) Analysis**

Reports, usually produced by specialists in the field of traffic modeling, which support future planning for toll facilities. These reports can be updated as routinely as every month and take factors such as demographics and regional economic conditions into consideration, they may also be used to inform financial reporting requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2022, October 26). *What is the National Environmental Policy Act?* <https://www.epa.gov/nepa/what-national-environmental-policy-act>