

Existing Practices: Low-Income Toll Program, Discounts, and Exemptions

STRAC September Meeting Materials

Date Updated: July 14, 2023

The purpose of this document is to provide information on existing discounts, exemptions, and low-income toll programs. This will inform the development of statewide rules (OARs) and Oregon's Low-Income Toll Program.

These existing practices are divided into longer, corridor-length toll programs and bridge toll projects.

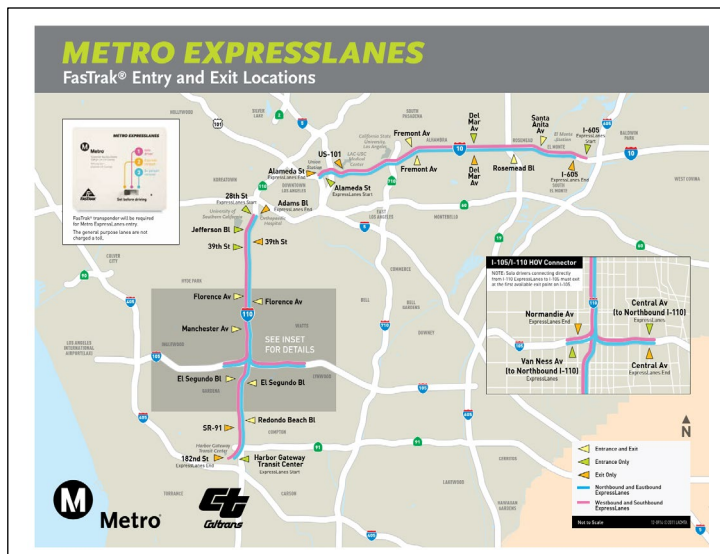
Low-Income Toll Programs, Discount, and Exemptions

I-10/I-110 Express Lanes

Location: Los Angeles

Converted 11 miles of existing I-110 high occupancy vehicles (HOV) lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes and 14 miles of the existing I-10 HOV lanes to HOT lanes, widened the Adams Boulevard overcrossing, and constructed a separate pedestrian overcrossing over I-110.

LA Metro provides [low-income assistance](#) to qualifying Los Angeles residents for the HOT Lanes.



Toll operator

LA Metro

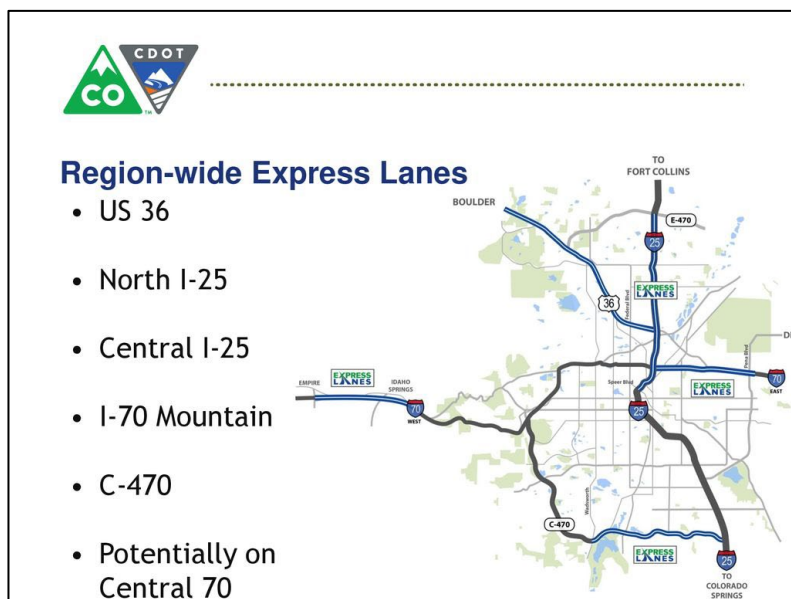
Low-income and other discounts or exemptions

- One-time \$25 credit when they set up their FasTrak account (proof of eligibility required)
 - \$1 monthly account maintenance fee is waived
 - Qualifying Los Angeles County residents
 - 0 - 200% Federal Poverty level income threshold
- Customers with a clean air vehicle (CAV) are eligible for a 15% discount off the posted toll rate on the I-10 and I-110 Metro ExpressLanes ([webpage](#))
- Frequent transit riders and FasTrak account holders can earn a \$5 toll credit to use on the on I-10 and I-110 Metro ExpressLanes through the Transit Rewards program ([webpage](#))
- Carpoolers that use the Metro ExpressLanes earn rewards through the Carpool Loyalty Program, which automatically enters Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak account holders who use the lanes as carpoolers into a monthly drawing for a chance to earn toll credits ([webpage](#))

Central 70 Express Lanes

Location: Denver, Colorado

The Central 70 Express Lane tolls will change in price depending on the level of congestion. As traffic increases, the toll price goes up to make sure the lane always remains a free-flowing alternative for travelers. Conversely, the toll price will decrease when there is less traffic in the lane. Drivers will always be charged the amount on the overhead signage when they enter the Express Lane.



The Colorado Transportation Investment Office provides [discounted access to low-income residents of Globeville and Elyria-Swansea](#).

Toll operator

Colorado Department of Transportation

Low-income and other discounts or exemptions

- \$100 annual toll credit and 10 free transit passes per year.
- Residents of Globeville and Elyria-Swansea (GES) with an annual household income below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL).
- Households displaced from GES due to the Central 70 Project with an annual household income below 200% of the FPL (Colorado DOT has a list).
- Approximately 5,623 GES residents are eligible for the program, corresponding to just over half (53%) of all households in these communities.
- High Occupancy Vehicles (3+ people), transit busses, and motorcycles travel free.

Illinois State Toll Highway Authority System

Location: Northern Illinois

The Illinois Tollway collects about \$1.5 billion / year in toll revenues and receives no funding from state or federal taxes. The 294-mile system includes the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80), Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-90), Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.



The Tollway operates the I-PASS brand for electronic tolls. Through the I-PASS program, the Tollway provides assistance to income-eligible individuals and families ([website](#)).

Toll operator

Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

Low-income discounts or exemptions

- All I-PASS customers get a 50% discount on tolls, as opposed to those paying by license plate or who are unregistered
- Eligibility based on household income below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Lower amount required to open an account (\$4 + no deposit)
- Eligible to have invoice fees dismissed
- In partnership with the Illinois Department of Revenue and the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Tollway is able to verify the eligibility of households via a secure web form to determine if household income falls below the required threshold or if households are currently participating in SNAP or TANF

Low-Income Toll Programs, Discount, and Exemptions

Multiple highways and bridges

Location: San Francisco Bay Area

Variable toll rate schedule on separated tolled lanes (High Occupancy Toll) and bridges ([website](#))

Toll operator

Bay Area Toll Authority

Low-income and other discounts or exemptions

- Toll discounts to carpools, motorcycles and eligible clean air vehicles during designated commute hours on all Bay Area bridges and toll-free travel for carpools and other qualified vehicles in express lanes throughout the day ([website](#))
- Clean Air Vehicles (CAVs) are eligible to travel toll free or at a discounted rate on Bay Area express lanes and state-owned bridges in the carpool lane, excluding the Golden Gate Bridge ([website](#))
- Qualifying Vanpools with 11–15 passengers that are registered with the Bay Area Vanpool Program can also cross bridges toll free ([website](#))
- For the Golden Gate Bridge lower-income residents (household income below 200% FPL) can receive a waiver for any penalties assessed due to late or missed payments of toll bridge crossings occurring during the pandemic between March 20, 2020 and January 1, 2023 ([website](#))
- One-time \$100 toll credit and \$100 annual transit credit for San Mateo 101 Express Lanes ([website](#))
 - Must be a resident of San Mateo County, age 18 or older, and earning an Individual Income at or below \$78,300 for 2022



Additional Corridor-Length Toll Examples

	Low-income and other discounts or exemptions
<p>I-395 Express Lanes and I-395 Express Lanes, Northern Virginia (website)</p> <p>Dynamic (congestion based) tolls on separated express lanes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-ZPass Flex incentive: Permits carpools of 3 or more passengers to ride the express lanes toll free with an E-ZPass Flex® set to "HOV ON"
<p>Dulles Toll Road, Northern Virginia (website)</p> <p>Managed lanes (all lanes tolled) with a set rate schedule</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minimum opening account balance for the E-ZPass was temporarily reduced from \$35 to \$20 for online and phone applications
<p>US 290 West, US 59 North, I-45 South, US 59 South, and US 290 West and the I-10 Katy Freeway Managed Lanes, Houston, TX (website)</p> <p>Variable toll rate schedule on separated tolled lanes (High Occupancy Toll)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepaid toll tags for residents of a neighborhood with primary vehicular access to/from the managed route Waived transponder fees based on qualifying users and provides additional time to pay a toll bill without incurring additional fines Provides a cash-based option for obtaining and managing EZ Tag transponders and accounts. EZ Tag customers can purchase a starter kit at local grocery stores and activate via text message
<p>I-75 South Metro Express Lanes, I-75 and I-575 Northwest Corridor Express Lanes, I-85 Express Lanes, and I-85 Express Lanes Extension in Georgia (website)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Shift Commute – Earn Toll Credits” offered an incentive program for a limited number of registrants that provided participants with toll credits for trips shifted to off-peak travel hours. By shifting the time of morning or evening trips on the I-85 Express Lanes, participants could earn up to \$120 in toll credits over a three-month period for trips on priced express lanes in a personal vehicle.¹ “Pay n Go Peach Pass” program that allows individuals to purchase or reload a pass in cash at

¹ This program was scheduled to end in March of 2019 and it is not immediately clear whether it has been or will be renewed.

Research: Existing Practices

Low-Income Toll Programs, Discount, and Exemptions

	many pharmacy locations around the state and does not require the individual to provide any vehicle information ² .
Multiple highways and express lanes throughout Florida (website).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary, pilot program: Each transponder with 35 or more paid transactions that occur within a calendar month automatically receives a 50% toll credit; Customers with two-axle vehicles only

² However, the Pay n Go Peach Pass charges an additional \$1.50 transaction fee to reload funds at retail locations, and it can't be used in toll-free modes such as for HOV exemptions.

Elizabeth River tunnels

Location: Hampton Roads, Virginia

Variable toll rate schedule on all lanes of a tunnel and bridge system connecting the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth.

[The Toll Relief Program](#) provides discounted tolls for low-income individuals.

Toll operator

Elizabeth River Crossings, with E-ZPass operated by Virginia Department of Transportation

Low-income and other discounts or exemptions

- 50% discount on tolls
 - Residents of Hampton Roads
 - Earn \$50,000 or less (individual income) per year
 - Have or open a Virginia E-ZPass account
 - Must drive a passenger vehicle (Vehicles over 2-axles are not eligible)
 - Must re-verify every year in-person at customer service
- No E-ZPass minimum balance required
- Approximately 2,000-3,000 enrolled, with average benefit of \$25/month



Additional Bridge Examples

	Low-income and other discounts or exemptions
<p>Tappan Zee Bridge (website)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced rate (\$0.50 off) for people who take more than 20 trips a month. Must be registered E-ZPass.³ • In New York City, the current plan is to offer a state tax credit to households earning less than \$60,000 annually for those that drive into the proposed cordon pricing area.
<p>Sam Houston Ship Channel Bridge (website)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans discount for vehicles that are registered in Texas and received a qualifying license plate
<p>Mountain Creek Lake Bridge (website)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans discount for Legion of Valor recipients to receive free passage on all Texas roads and tollway
<p>Delaware Memorial Bridge (website)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers discount programs for frequent travelers and commuters that are tag specific and apply only to passenger vehicles (2-axle, single tire) with New Jersey E-ZPass® transponders
<p>I-78 Toll Bridge (website)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The frequency-based 20% discount that reduces the \$1.25 Class 1 E-ZPass toll to \$1 whenever monthly eligibility criteria is met • This discount is applied as a retroactive credit, after 16 or more tolled trips across Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission (DRJTBC) bridges are recorded in a respective calendar month on a passenger-vehicle

³ EZ Pass Discounts. New York State (<https://www.thruway.ny.gov/ezpass/discount.html>).