



Appendix E

Community Outreach

Chicago Regional Congestion Pricing Study

Frequently Asked Questions: Congestion Pricing

What is congestion pricing? Is congestion pricing a way to raise revenues?

The goal of congestion pricing is not to raise revenue. Congestion pricing is a tool that is gaining popularity across the country and world as a way to ease traffic gridlock, improve the environment and create a higher quality of life overall. The tenet behind congestion pricing is simple: increase costs for service when there is the greatest demand to encourage and offer users other alternatives. Before congestion pricing is implemented, transit capacity—often in the form of additional buses—is increased to provide alternative travel options.

What are the various forms of congestion pricing?

- *Road Tolls:* Tolls are a fee-for-service on a roadway.
- *Congestion Pricing:* Congestion Pricing refers to variable road pricing (higher prices under congested conditions and lower prices at less congested times and locations) intended to reduce rush hour vehicle trips that don't have to be taken at the most congested times. Tolls can be based on a fixed schedule or can change depending on the level of congestion at the given time.
- *Cordon (Area) Tolls:* Cordon tolls are fees paid by motorists to drive in a particular area, usually a city center. Some cordon tolls only apply during peak periods, such as weekdays.
- *HOT Lanes:* High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes are High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes that also allow access to low occupancy vehicles if drivers pay a toll. Basically, a single passenger car could use a designated bus-only or carpool lane for a fee.
- *Vehicle Mileage Tax:* Distance-Based Charges such as mileage fees.
- *Parking Pricing:* Motorists pay directly to use parking facilities. Parking Pricing may be implemented as a parking management strategy (to reduce parking scarcity in a particular location), as a mobility management strategy (to reduce vehicle traffic in an area), to recover parking facility costs, to generate revenue for other purposes (such as a local transportation program or downtown improvement district), or for a combination of these objectives.

Why is 'congestion pricing' being explored as an option?

According to the Texas Transportation Institute's 2007 Urban Mobility Report, the Chicago region wastes over 202 million hours, 141 million gallons of excess fuel, and almost \$4 billion to travel delay. Average hours of delay per person have doubled in the past 20 years. In the same time period, the region added 2,000 miles of new roads.

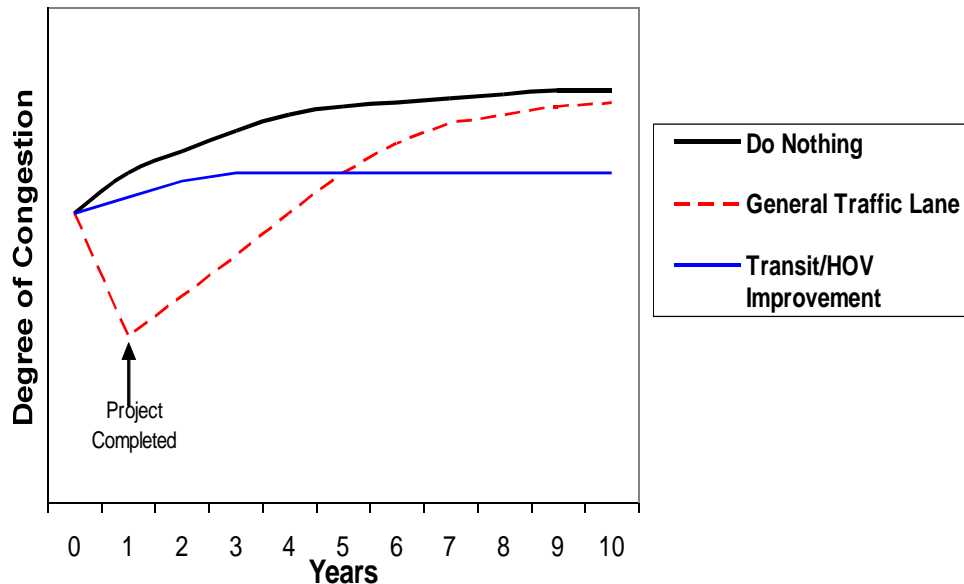
Clearly, adding more lane miles to the road system is not the solution. With another 2 million people expected to live in our region by 2030, the problem will only get worse, causing difficulties for people to get to jobs, discouraging businesses from locating to the region, and bringing the Chicago economy to a complete halt. Congestion pricing is one innovative tool that will help alleviate some of these problems caused by congestion.

Will the Chicago region's traffic gridlock be improved through congestion pricing?

If other cities' experiences with congestion pricing are any guide, gridlock will be reduced. In London, the total amount of traffic entering the congestion zone decreased by 22 percent and increased speeds from 8.5 mph to 10.1 mph. Stockholm experienced a daily decline of 115,000 trips per day and a 14 percent reduction of exhaust emissions during its trial period of congestion pricing. After the trial ended, traffic increased overnight by 20 percent. If there is an initial investment in alternative modes of transportation, such as transit, prior to the implementation of a congestion pricing program, studies have shown that there will be a decrease in traffic and improvements in the region's environment.

Why can't more lanes be built to alleviate traffic?

The graphic below produced by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute shows that when additional traffic lanes are opened, the region benefits from a considerable decrease in congestion in the first year. However, within just 10 years, the degree of congestion worsens and traffic eventually reaches the same level of congestion the region would have incurred if no improvements would have ever been made. Transit improvements, especially if they are implemented in coordination with congestion pricing implementation, will likely provide the best long-term benefit.



What is the business community's reaction to congestion pricing?

David Yassky, chairman of the small business committee for New York's City Council, released a study that examined the effects of congestion pricing on small businesses. It noted that in London, where cordon pricing is in effect, businesses in the charging zone outperformed those outside of the corridor. Recently a study of the London business community showed strong support for the congestion charge "provided that there is continued investment in public transportation."

How would congestion pricing benefit those who are already struggling to pay for his/her transportation costs?

'Choice commuters' are those who, for example, can choose between taking public transit to their job downtown or driving their car. Lower-income commuters are usually not 'choice commuters' and are, therefore, more dependent on public transportation, especially buses. When improvements to transit systems are implemented, there is a greater benefit to lower-income residents. Increasing transit infrastructure prior to congestion pricing programs is necessary. By adding buses and increasing transit capacity, those with limited resources would now have more options to keep their transportation costs low and utilize accessible transit to get them to their destination.

Is the practice of charging motorists a fee the only form of congestion pricing?

Congestion pricing is used in many industries. Airline ticket prices, phone usage and electricity rates, for example, vary by level of demand. Even the Washington, D.C. region's Metro transit system charges users higher rates for the morning and afternoon rush hours to accommodate the influx of commuters. During the holiday season, rush hours, or in congested locations, some cities incorporate congestion pricing mechanisms into their parking policies as well. This practice encourages the use of public transportation, for example, which helps alleviate traffic problems and bottleneck conditions.

Does congestion pricing for transportation exist in the United States?

Yes! Congestion pricing exists in several formats and has been implemented in several U.S. cities. Some examples include:

High Occupancy Tolls (HOT) – charges motorists for use with the price varying, based on volume

- a. San Diego, Calif.: I-15
- b. Denver, Colo.: I-25
- c. Minneapolis, Minn.: I-394
- d. Salt Lake City, Utah: I-15

Congestion Pricing Has Been Proposed in:

- a. New York City, N.Y. – \$8 car, \$21 truck charge to enter central and lower Manhattan 6am-6pm
- b. Seattle, Wash. – Variable pricing on select roads coupled with enhanced bus service
- c. San Francisco, Calif. – Variable pricing on access road to Golden Gate Bridge
- d. Miami, Fla. – Conversion of HOV lanes to HOT lanes

What would it cost to implement congestion pricing?

The 2006 Stockholm pilot project cost \$294 million to implement, and \$50 million per year to operate. However, prices are declining as technology advances. Studies are researching the costs of implementing congestion pricing programs and are comparing those results to the costs incurred by the region if nothing is done to alleviate traffic congestion. Open Road Tolling and I-PASS transponder technology already in place may be adaptable to lessen the costs of implementing congestion pricing in the Chicago region.

What happens to the money generated from congestion pricing?

London used the \$197 million of net revenue to pay for increased and improved bus services, road safety, and cycling/pedestrian facilities. Germany's distance-based toll program for trucks allocates 50 percent for revenues for road improvements, 28 percent for rail improvements, and 12 percent for waterways. Oslo's Toll Ring uses revenues for road and tunnel infrastructure, and allocated 20 percent of its revenues to public transportation. Revenues generated from congestion pricing are spent differently in each example. Since congestion pricing is still in a study phase for the Chicago region, revenue allocation has not yet been determined. However, the process for making these determinations will rely upon public input and participation.

Won't the traffic move from the tollways to major streets in our communities?

If done correctly, congestion pricing will increase options to encourage public transportation use. However, the Chicago region is currently working on a comprehensive study to analyze the effects of congestion pricing on major arterials so that the congestion problems on our tollways and highways today does not relocate to our communities and neighborhoods tomorrow..



Outreach At a Glance

Illinois Tollway Congestion Pricing Study COG Presentations, Spring 2008

General Questions on Congestion Pricing

- What happens to local roads if congestion pricing is implemented?
- How do you ensure that traffic won't be diverted to the local roads?
- What incentives could be implemented to allow employers to allow flexible work schedules?
- Would congestion pricing most likely affect the working poor?
- What is done with the revenues?
- Will there be incentives to promote operational change?
- Who bears the cost of implementation?
- How would we create enough transit options to make congestion pricing work?



Specific Questions on Tollway Study

- What are the optimal conditions - free flowing traffic?
- What is the plan for the discussion of policy and public input/outreach?
- How will the study impact Metra's STAR line plans?
- Will the study conduct cost benefit analysis models?
- Are land use models a part of the study?
- Will there be opportunities to include current community plans already established?



Based on feedback collected from the various Council of Government presentations, the following goals were established to help guide the agency and elected officials workshops:

Goals For Workshops

- ◆ To inform the stakeholders about the congestion pricing study
- ◆ To inform the stakeholders of congestion pricing strategies in other urban regions, and to determine their general reaction to congestion pricing for the Chicago region.
- ◆ To obtain input on the perceived benefits of congestion pricing and obstacles to its implementation.
- ◆ To garner stakeholders' opinions on alternative congestion pricing strategies for the region.
- ◆ To provide scenarios specific to the Chicago region and gather feedback on their viability.
- ◆ To seek suggestions for addressing community concerns related to congestion pricing, and disseminating information to public.

Outreach Recap

12 Meetings to Date
2 Workshops
Agency (Chicago)
Elected Officials (Oak Brook)
26 Workshop Attendees
350+ People heard congestion pricing presentation
110+ Elected officials
8 COG & Metropolitan Mayors Caucus



KEYPAD POLLING RESULTS: Workshops

Illinois Tollway Congestion Pricing
Study, Spring 2008

GOALS

1. Reduce congestion
2. Shift to transit
3. Increase travel options
4. Generate and reinvest revenue to transportation improvements
5. Improve the quality of life
6. Environmental benefits

OBSTACLES

1. Social equity
2. Lack of transportation options/alternatives
3. Lack of political will
4. Cost of implementation
5. Diversion to local roads
6. Public opinion/education
7. Inability to shift work hours
8. Potential to create more congestion

BENEFITS

1. Reduce congestion
2. Reinvest revenues
3. Potential comprehensive solution
4. Provide alternatives and encourage mode shift
5. Environmental
6. Increase revenue
7. Save money (gas consumption)

Key Issues

- ~ Fixed pricing (including a super-peak hour) was preferred over variable pricing
- ~ Transit options must be increased before congestion pricing could be implemented
- ~ Must be a transparent process to help determine how revenues are spent
- ~ Engage advocacy groups early in the discussions to address issues with social equity

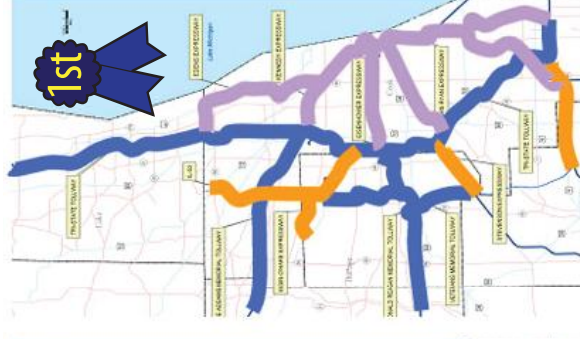


Most Appropriate for Congestion Pricing

1 Tollways Only

2 Tollways + Limited IDOT Expressways

3 Tollways + All IDOT Expressways



When ranking preferences of most appropriate scenario to implement congestion pricing, both groups ranked scenario #3 as their first choice followed by scenario #2.

Lane Configuration Options

