

Congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205

The Federal Highway Administration and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) are beginning an environmental analysis to identify the potential benefits and negative impacts of congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205. This proposal is known as the Regional Mobility Pricing Project.

What is congestion pricing?

Congestion pricing describes a type of toll that aims to improve mobility, travel times, and reliability by charging a higher price during peak traffic periods and congested locations. Charging a variable rate toll would decrease the number of people using the highway at the most congested times, reducing traffic congestion and providing a more reliable trip for people that remain on the highway at rush hours.

People would know the cost of their trip before they get on the road to make informed choices about how and when they travel. When a small number of drivers choose other options instead of driving alone during rush hour, it improves travel times and reliability, reduces regional greenhouse gas emissions, and allows more drivers to use these highways efficiently. Other options that drivers may choose include taking fewer trips, choosing alternate destinations, carpooling, or traveling by a different mode or at a different time (or a combination of these).



Project area for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project and I-205 Toll Project.

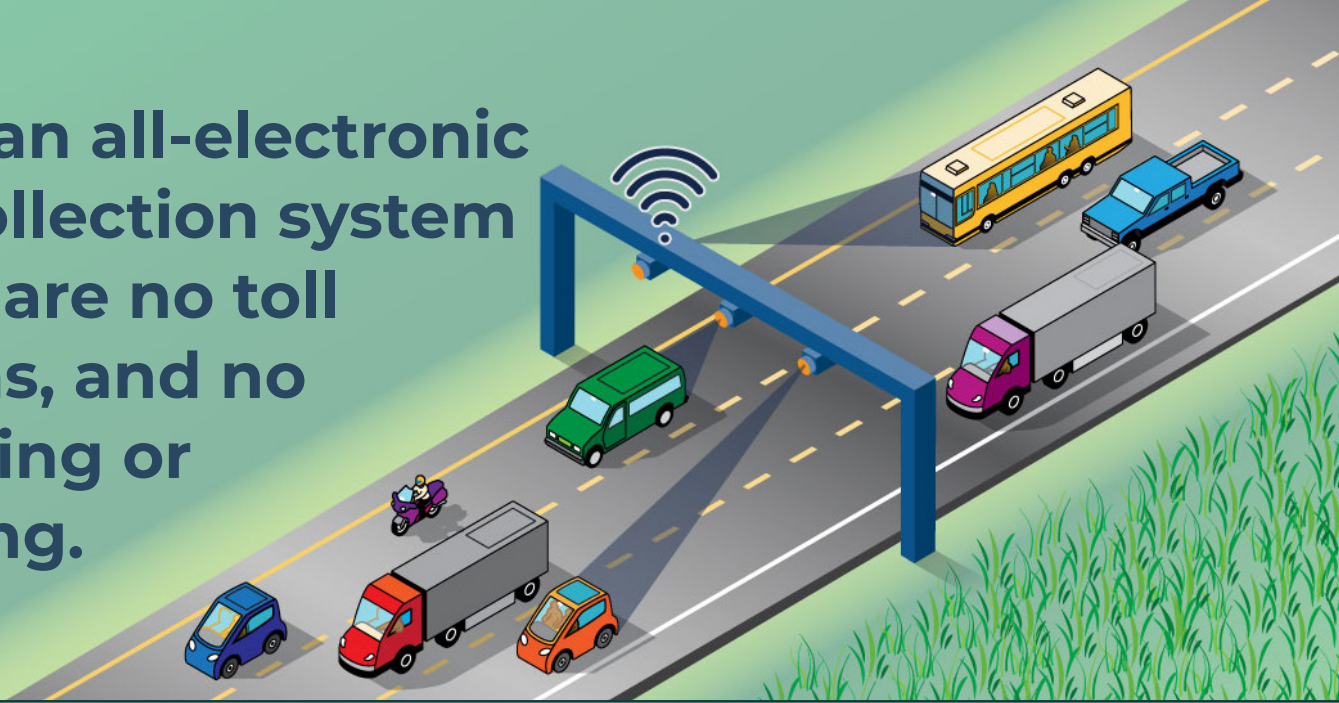
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Learn more and share your voice!

Visit our website for information and submit comments on the scope of our study by Jan. 6, 2023: oregontolling.org

With an all-electronic toll collection system there are no toll booths, and no stopping or slowing.



Proposed Action

We have developed a “Proposed Action,” which describes the project concept we will study and how congestion pricing could work on I-5 and I-205. In the environmental analysis, we will study how the Proposed Action affects community and environmental issues such as air quality, safety, traffic congestion, and rerouting onto other streets.

The Proposed Action has been informed by planning, public input and analysis over the past several years.

Tolling on all lanes of I-5 and I-205. The project includes congestion pricing all existing lanes of the interstates, rather than pricing a single existing lane or a newly constructed lane.

Why? Early analysis shows that tolling all lanes, as compared to tolling a single express lane, would provide the most congestion relief while keeping costs lower for all drivers.

Tolls based on a set schedule. A set schedule allows drivers to determine the cost of their trip ahead of time to plan their travel. Trip costs would vary depending on the specific trip.

Why? People need predictable toll costs to plan travel.

Tolls based on location and time of day. The toll rate schedule would vary based on time of day and location, known as variable rate tolls. Drivers would be charged higher toll rates at congested locations during morning and afternoon rush hours and lower tolls at less congested locations during other times of day.

Why? A toll would decrease the number of people using the highway at the most congested times, reducing traffic congestion and providing a more reliable trip for people that remain on the highway.

Toll rates would be monitored and adjusted after tolling begins. Toll rates adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission would be informed by traffic modeling. After tolling begins, the schedule would be monitored and adjusted periodically based on actual (not modeled) traffic data.

Why? Regular updates help the system evolve over time as the region continues to grow and traffic patterns change. Monitoring and adjusting toll rates based on actual traffic data would ensure congestion pricing continues to reduce congestion while minimizing rerouting onto other streets well into the future.

Tolls on all of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area. Tolls are being studied on I-5 between the Columbia River and the Boone Bridge in Wilsonville and on I-205 from the Columbia River to where I-205 intersects with I-5 in Tualatin. Depending on the study results, the actual tolled area may be reduced before tolls are implemented. Two other toll projects are proposed in the Portland metropolitan area to reduce traffic congestion and upgrade important bridges: the [Interstate Bridge Replacement Program](#) and [I-205 Toll Project](#) – drivers would not pay an additional toll on sections already tolled by these other projects.

Why? Studying the project in combination with other toll projects and using the largest area of effect during the environmental review process allows for the most accurate results. After or during the environmental analysis, the toll boundaries may be adjusted to meet congestion relief goals.

Drivers would pay a toll through an all-electronic collection system. Drivers would not stop to pay a toll. When driving on I-5 and I-205, vehicles would go under a structure with equipment to read a toll tag – a sticker that attaches to a car’s windshield. If no tag is detected, a temporary photo would be taken of the license plate, and the registered driver would receive a bill in the mail.

Why? All-electronic tolling saves time for travelers, and you never have to stop.



In addition, we will evaluate:

- Pricing at various times of day at all locations. This allows us to identify the greatest degree of potential effects. This may be adjusted during or after the environmental analysis.
- A congestion pricing structure that reduces traffic congestion while minimizing rerouting onto local roadways.
- Discount options for people experiencing low incomes and other approaches to develop a low-income toll program and best practices for implementation. ODOT issued a [Low Income Toll Report](#) in September 2022 to describe an approach for developing a low-income toll program, which will be applied to this project.



How will we identify the benefits and potential impacts of the Proposed Action?

We will analyze how the Proposed Action affects community and environmental issues such as air quality, safety, traffic congestion, and rerouting on local streets. In 2023, we'll share the results for public review and comment in a formal report, called an Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment is an important step to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and obtain a federal decision for tolling on I-5 and I-205. The earliest tolling could begin under the Regional Mobility Pricing Project is in late 2025.

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The information in this document, and the public and agency input received, may be adopted or incorporated by reference into a future environmental review process to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.