



CITY OF

## PORTLAND, OREGON

Ted Wheeler, Mayor  
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner  
Nick Fish, Commissioner  
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner  
Chloe Eudaly, Commissioner

June 29, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Baney, Chair  
Oregon Transportation Commission  
355 Capitol Street, NE MS 11  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Baney and Members of the Oregon Transportation Commission,

The City of Portland is supportive of the state legislature's directive to implement value pricing in our region. Our recently adopted Central City Plan calls for value pricing along the I-5 Rose Quarter project as a climate mitigation action. This region's residents, businesses, and visitors are all feeling the impact of increased congestion. This congestion comes with many costs. It costs us in time, it costs us in fuel and vehicle repair costs, our health is damaged by air pollution and extra sedentary time in cars, and it adds to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Unacceptably, these costs can hit our lower income residents and communities of color hardest because they often have longer commute trips and live closer to freeways.

We cannot build our way out of our congestion problem. We must find new tools. Pricing is a proven strategy for reducing congestion, addressing climate change and environmental pollutants, and may be designed to reduce inequities that exist in our current transportation system. We would like to see the ODOT value pricing process move forward to the next phase for further analysis during a National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process.

Any pricing program must be carefully designed for success and grounded in the following policy objectives:

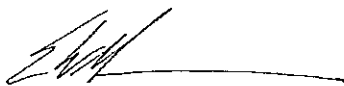
- 1) **The primary objective of any pricing program must be to manage demand**, as opposed to generating revenue for unmanaged increases in capacity. Demand management works to maximize efficiency on existing roads and provides the greatest congestion relief and travel time savings. This principle has been recognized twice under state law [ORS 366.292 and HB 2017 Section 120(3)].
- 2) **Improved transit must be matched with pricing to most effectively manage congestion and provide affordable options for system users.** Pricing revenue, to the extent allowed by law, should be used to support this objective. An analysis of the optimal expansion of transit to be paired with demand management, should be a foundational part of the analysis.

- 3) **Creating a more equitable system must drive policy development. It is not enough to simply mitigate burdens to historically marginalized communities, including communities of color and people with low-income.** Providing shorter travel times, better air quality and safer corridor travel, should be paired with reduced fees, and enhanced transit, in order to create a transportation system that offers more benefits and less burdens to low-income communities and communities of color.
- 4) **We must maintain or improve safety levels on the surrounding local network,** especially in cases of traffic diversion from priced throughways. Revenue should be dedicated to safety improvements on arterials which see diversion.
- 5) **Managing demand should lead to environmental benefits,** including reduction in CO2 and particulates emissions.

### *Proposed Scenarios*

- 1) **Portland supports the referral of Option C to the Oregon Transportation Commission for further analysis.** This would implement comprehensive pricing for demand management on most of I-5 and I-205 in the metro region. Initial modeling of Option C shows the greatest travel time savings and revenue generation, as well as the lowest toll rates of any of the proposed options. This could be implemented in phases, prioritizing the highest performing segments.
- 2) **The City is supportive of continued evaluation of Options B (I-5 only) and E (Abernethy Bridge) as a phased approach to achieving option C.** Additional analysis of Option B must include more detailed consideration of starting and ending points due to diversion concerns. Revenue generated from Option B must be used to ensure corridor safety and multimodal options, including transit. **Revenue from I-5 tolling shall not be used to fund I-205 expansion. Similar demand management strategies should be used in the I-205 corridor.**

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the critical policies and details necessary to implement a successful value pricing program in the Portland Metro region. We have an opportunity to be national leaders and create a program that helps to relieve congestion, improve climate and environmental pollutants, and provide a range of multimodal options to improve transportation outcomes for all users. We look forward to continuing this important work together.



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