

# Regional Mobility Pricing Project

## Summer 2021 Engagement Report

November 2021



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Prepared for:



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# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>REPORT PURPOSE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>PROJECT CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>4</b>
3.1	Purpose of engagement.....	4
3.2	Engagement and public input activities .....	4
3.2.1	“Simple” surveys .....	4
3.2.2	Briefings.....	5
3.2.3	Toll Program work groups .....	5
3.2.4	Other input methods .....	6
3.3	Engagement with historically excluded and underserved communities .....	6
3.3.1	Surveys .....	6
3.3.2	Discussion groups.....	7
3.4	Stakeholder and public notification .....	8
3.4.1	Social media: Paid and unpaid posts .....	8
3.4.2	Email.....	8
<b>4</b>	<b>RESULTS BY THE NUMBERS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
4.1	Total engagement.....	9
4.2	Total comments received .....	9
<b>5</b>	<b>KEY TAKEAWAYS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>13</b>
6.1	Data assessment .....	13
6.2	Data integrity .....	13
<b>7</b>	<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b> .....	<b>14</b>
7.1	Demographics.....	14
7.1.1	Response by geography .....	14
7.1.2	Responses by income.....	16
7.1.3	Responses by disability status.....	16
7.1.4	Response by Race.....	17
<b>8</b>	<b>SURVEY RESULTS BY TOPIC</b> .....	<b>18</b>
8.1	Getting around on I-5 and I-205 in greater Portland .....	18
8.2	Transportation challenges on I-5 and I-205 in greater Portland .....	19
8.3	Community priorities and values.....	22
8.4	Ways to make a toll program work better.....	23
8.5	Considerations for designing a toll program.....	24

<b>9</b>	<b>DISCUSSION GROUP FEEDBACK.....</b>	<b>28</b>
9.1	Discussion group themes.....	28
9.2	Questions, comments and concerns about toll system implementation .....	29
9.3	Unique results.....	30
<b>10</b>	<b>BRIEFINGS .....</b>	<b>32</b>
10.1	Purpose and approach .....	32
10.2	Briefings by type .....	32
10.3	Themes of comments.....	34
<b>11</b>	<b>TOLL PROGRAM WORK GROUPS AND COMMITTEES.....</b>	<b>36</b>
11.1	EMAC key themes and outcomes.....	36
11.2	RPAS key themes and outcomes .....	37
11.3	TMWG key themes .....	37
11.4	R1 ACT+ Toll Work Group key themes.....	38
<b>12</b>	<b>PROBLEM STATEMENT COMMENTS.....</b>	<b>39</b>
12.1	Key themes from comments.....	39
<b>13</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.....</b>	<b>40</b>
13.1	Communications topics.....	40
13.2	Communications key themes.....	41
<b>14</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS .....</b>	<b>43</b>
14.1	Opportunities for future involvement .....	43

## Figures

Figure 1-1.	Traffic on Portland highway.....	1
Figure 2-1.	Regional Mobility Pricing Project area.....	3
Figure 2-2.	Oregon Toll Program timeline .....	3
Figure 3-1.	Instagram stories survey post.....	4
Figure 3-2.	EMAC meeting participants .....	5
Figure 3-3.	Facebook survey post in Vietnamese .....	7
Figure 3-4.	Black/African American discussion group (September 13, 2021).....	7
Figure 3-5.	Facebook survey post .....	8
Figure 7-1.	Heat Map of all online survey responses by ZIP code.....	15
Figure 8-1.	Survey Question: Since the beginning of March of last year, has your travel in Oregon on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro area changed? (n=2,559) .....	18
Figure 8-2.	Survey Question: Next year, I think I will: (n=2,555) .....	19
Figure 8-3.	Survey Question: Tell us about your experience on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro area in Oregon over the past couple of months: Is traffic a problem on I-5 and I-205? (n=2,566) .....	20

Figure 8-4. Survey Question: We have identified some transportation challenges in the Portland metro area. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (n=1,320)..... 21

Figure 8-5. Survey Question: Driving in Oregon on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro area may mean paying a toll in the future. People traveling on I-205 and I-5 will have options. Commuters could adjust their travel times and pay less by avoiding times of heavy traffic or take transit to avoid the fee. We understand no one enjoys paying tolls or fees, but tolling does provide benefits. Which benefits are most important to you? Please select up to three choices. (n=1,825)..... 23

Figure 8-6. Survey Question: In Oregon, the benefit of paying a variable toll is less traffic and a more reliable trip. If we start a toll program, how can we make this easier for community members? A toll program would be better for me or my community if... (select up to 4 choices): (n=1,092)..... 24

Figure 8-7. Scenario survey questions..... 27

Figure 9-1. Vietnamese discussion group (August 8, 2021) ..... 31

**Tables**

Table 4-1. Total engagement..... 9

Table 4-2. Total responses ..... 9

Table 7-1. Response by county ..... 14

Table 7-2. Response by income..... 16

Table 7-3. Response by disability status..... 17

Table 7-4. Response by Race N = 498..... 17

Table 10-1. Elected officials and regional and technical committees ..... 32

Table 10-2. Community-based organizations..... 33

Table 13-1. June-September topics coded ..... 40

**Appendices**

- I. Engagement Report Appendix: Engagement Tools and Performance
- II. Engagement Report Appendix: Survey Content
- III. Engagement Report Appendix: Cross-Tabulations of Survey Findings
- IV. Engagement Report Appendix: Discussion Group Summaries



## Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
EMAC	Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
I-5/I-205	Interstate 5/Interstate 205
IBR	Interstate Bridge Replacement Program
IP	Internet Protocol
mph	miles per hour
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
OTC	Oregon Transportation Commission
Project	Regional Mobility Pricing Project
R1 ACT	Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation
RPAS	Regional Partner Agency Staff
TMWG	Transit and Multimodal Working Group

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# 1 Report Purpose

From June to September 2021, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) shared information and invited public and agency comments during the initial planning phase of the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (Project). A key outcome of this phase is for ODOT, with oversight from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), to finalize the draft Purpose and Need Statement and to identify alternatives to carry forward for detailed analysis in the formal environmental review phase under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Hearing from a diversity of voices is an important priority for this project. For this reason, principles from the Oregon Toll Program’s Equity Framework were applied to invite participation from historically excluded and underserved communities, some of whom do not speak English as their first language.

This report details results of summer 2021 engagement activities and the key themes of what was heard. This feedback will inform planning in project development.

**Figure 1-1. Traffic on Portland highway**



## 2 Project Context

Oregon currently faces an annual shortfall of \$510 million in its ability to adequately maintain bridges and pavement. By 2040, Portland metro households will spend an average of 69 hours each year stuck in congestion without new transportation investments. The direction to develop a tolling program began in 2017, when the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2017, known as “Keep Oregon Moving.” The bill provided funding for transportation improvements and directed the Oregon Transportation Commission to implement tolls on Interstate 205 (I-205) and I-5 in the greater Portland area. In 2018, ODOT led a feasibility study, with substantial public input, and concluded that tolls could help meet priority goals.

The Project would apply variable-rate tolls on all lanes of I-5 and I-205 in Oregon in the Portland metropolitan area to manage congestion and raise revenue for priority transportation projects. The Project area begins just south of the Columbia River in Oregon and ends at the Boone Bridge in Wilsonville. Tolls would vary throughout the day with higher tolls at peak traffic times, a concept known as “congestion pricing.” The Project proposes to focus on solutions to these needs:

- Daily congestion is negatively affecting the quality of life in a growing region.
- Traffic congestion is slowing down economic growth.
- Our transportation system must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by managing congestion.
- Revenues from the gas tax are not sufficient to fund transportation infrastructure needs.
- Our transportation system must support multimodal travel to reduce congestion.
- The Portland metropolitan area’s transportation networks have resulted in inequitable outcomes for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities.

Currently, ODOT has two toll projects underway. In addition to this Project, ODOT is conducting an environmental review for the I-205 Toll Project, which would toll vehicles crossing the Abernethy and Tualatin River bridges to help fund construction of the I-205 Improvements Project. The earliest tolls could begin on I-205 in 2024.



**Figure 2-1. Regional Mobility Pricing Project area**



**Figure 2-2. Oregon Toll Program timeline**



## 3 Opportunities for Engagement

### 3.1 Purpose of engagement

The purpose of engagement was to build awareness of the Project, understand current perceptions of traffic and transportation problems, and invite public conversations around congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 and ways to make it easier on the community. Public and agency feedback, both quantitative and qualitative, will help inform development of the Purpose and Need Statement and development of Project alternatives. In response to guidance from Governor Kate Brown during the COVID-19 pandemic, most engagement activities were held virtually through webinars or online tools except for some engagement with historically excluded and underserved communities, as described below.

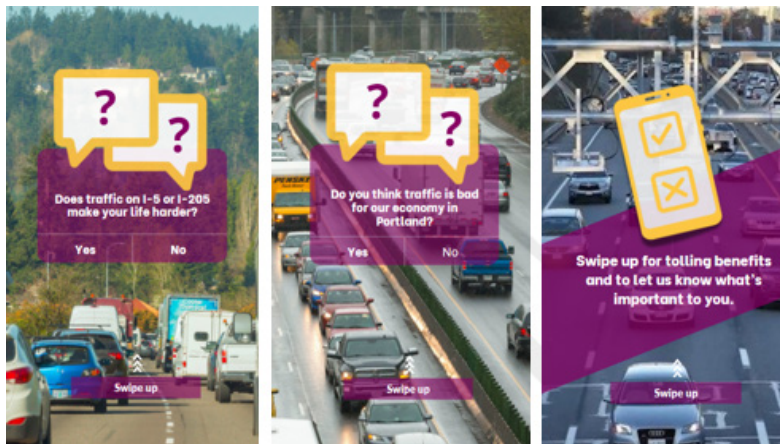
### 3.2 Engagement and public input activities

The following activities were conducted in this phase.

#### 3.2.1 “Simple” surveys

A series of five, simple surveys were shared via social media for the general public to provide input from late June through August. The intent was to encourage engagement with easy and accessible ways to participate. because people have limited time, there are other significant transportation projects ongoing, and in consideration of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. For these reasons, the surveys were multiple choice, had a limited number of questions, and were written in plain language. Because the survey offered new questions each week, people could respond to one or more surveys depending on their interest. See Section 8 for a summary of results.

**Figure 3-1. Instagram stories survey post**



### 3.2.2 Briefings

Virtual briefings were held with technical and policy committees, elected officials, community-based organizations, and business groups through summer 2021. Briefings will continue on an ongoing basis through fall 2021. The briefings provide an overview of the ODOT Urban Mobility Office, Oregon Tolling Program, and toll projects; answer key questions about tolling; and provide opportunities to provide input to ODOT about key interests and concerns. Additional detail about the briefings is provided in Section 10.

### 3.2.3 Toll Program work groups

Five working groups are currently advising the Toll Program: the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC), the Regional Partner Agency Staff (RPAS) group, Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation (R1 ACT) Toll Work Group,<sup>1</sup> the Regional Modeling Group and the Transit and Multimodal Working Group (TMWG). Summary feedback and meeting outcomes from these work groups are listed in Section 11.

**Figure 3-2. EMAC meeting participants**



<sup>1</sup> The Toll Work Group was formed in September 2021 as a subcommittee of the Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation (R1 ACT). It also includes participants from southwest Washington who are not regular members of the R1 ACT. The Toll Work Group allows for thorough discussion on planning for the Oregon Toll Program, but the group will not make formal recommendations.

### **3.2.4 Other input methods**

Community members could also provide input by sending emails or letters to the Project team, submitting a comment through the Project website, emailing OregonTolling@odot.state.or.us, or leaving a voicemail on the Project phone line at 503-837-3536.

### **3.3 Engagement with historically excluded and underserved communities**

ODOT partnered with the Community Engagement Liaisons Program and engagement subconsultants to conduct focused, meaningful engagement with historically excluded and underserved groups. Trusted leaders from various communities used multilingual tools and flexible, accessible methods to reach individuals or groups who identify as Latin American, Russian/Slavic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Native American, and Black/African American. The community liaisons invited feedback through discussion groups and surveys. Additionally, they shared information and encouraged participation through social media, email, phone, or providing paper copies of the surveys.

Prior to beginning engagement, a series of planning sessions were held with the lead for the Community Engagement Liaisons Program and engagement subconsultants to advise on the approach and content for the discussion groups and survey. To provide resources and Project information for community liaisons, a two-part orientation was held and engagement resources and resources were distributed.

#### **3.3.1 Surveys**

The community liaisons invited input via a survey tool available in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and English. The survey included all the same questions as the series of simple surveys distributed online and through social media, combined into one form. One new demographic question was added to identify race and ethnicity of respondents to determine participation among historically excluded and underserved audiences. While developing the survey, the lead for the Community Engagement Liaisons Program advised on the survey questions and approach to help with plain language and to promote participation.

Community liaisons distributed the survey via social media, email, and by inviting discussion group participants to take the survey and share with their friends and family. Based on requests from the community liaisons, paper surveys were provided in English, Russian, and Vietnamese. The community liaison for the Black/African American community distributed and collected surveys at a farmer's market.



**Figure 3-3. Facebook survey post in Vietnamese**

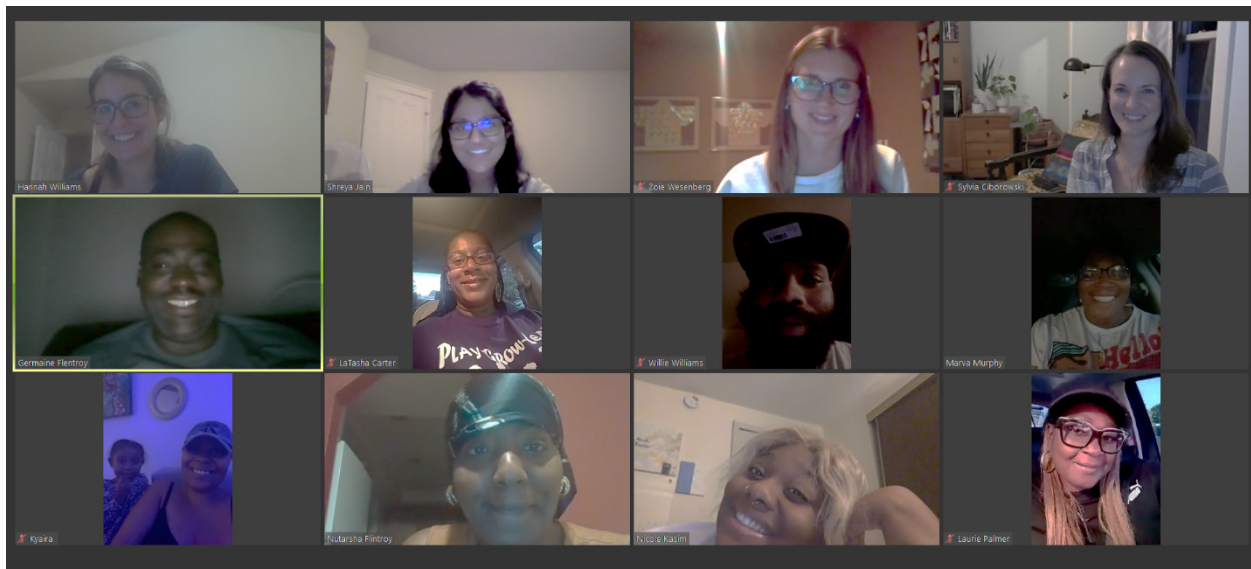


### 3.3.2 Discussion groups

The community liaisons recruited participants and facilitated six virtual discussion groups for in-depth engagement around topics that were asked in the surveys. Community liaisons provided in-language interpretation and translation of presentation materials, as appropriate for discussion group participants. As an incentive to join in the discussion groups, ODOT provided gift cards of \$43.75 to participants.

Following an opening welcome and introductions, Project team staff reviewed a presentation to provide brief background about the Project and tolling. Staff then answered any clarifying questions about the Project. Next, community liaisons facilitated a discussion and invited verbal feedback from participants.

**Figure 3-4. Black/African American discussion group (September 13, 2021)**





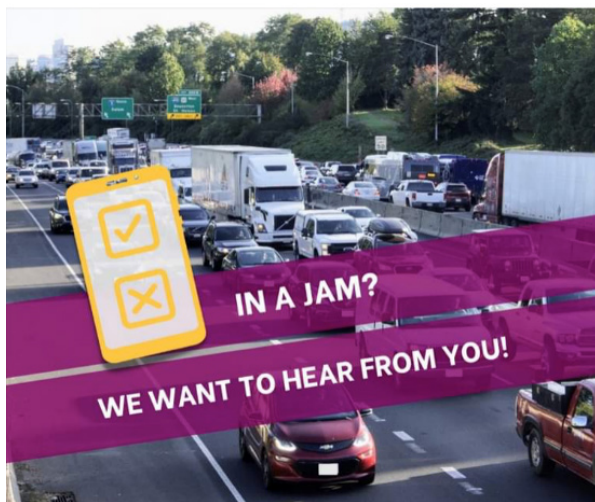
### 3.4 Stakeholder and public notification

Information about the engagement opportunities was shared through ODOT information channels, including the Oregon Tolling website, recurring Oregon Toll Program eNews updates, and social media. Partners, including the EMAC and regional committees, were encouraged to share information with their networks. Community engagement liaisons also distributed a long-form version of the survey that combined questions from the five simple surveys.

#### 3.4.1 Social media: Paid and unpaid posts

Surveys were promoted on ODOT’s Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn channels, using a combination of organic posts and paid Facebook ads. The Facebook ads were programmed to reach Facebook users in the greater Portland metropolitan area north to Clark County and south to Wilsonville, including portions of Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, and Marion counties. On Instagram, the “Instagram Story” feature was used to promote the surveys, with a “swipe up” option for users to take the survey. Additional detail is provided in the appendix.

**Figure 3-5. Facebook survey post**



#### 3.4.2 Email

ODOT encouraged survey participation through a series of Oregon Toll Program eNews updates and broadcast emails to agency partners. The first survey was promoted in the June 30 eNews, followed by a series of four eNews updates to promote each of the remaining surveys.

In addition to online engagement for the surveys, information on ways to provide feedback on the Problem Statement was shared in the June and July eNews and through emails to agency partners. The public was asked to share feedback by emailing the Oregon Tolling Project team by July 30, 2021.

## 4 Results by the Numbers

### 4.1 Total engagement

**Table 4-1. Total engagement**

Activity	Engagement
Facebook paid ads	361,000 views
Unpaid social media posts	146,000 views
Webpage	3,000 views
eNews	6,500 subscribers
Discussion groups	59 participants
Organizations, councils, and boards	29 entities briefed
Oregon Toll Program work groups and advisory committees	12 meetings

### 4.2 Total comments received

**Table 4-2. Total responses**

Response Type	Number
<b>Total Survey Responses</b>	<b>6,503</b>
Simple Survey 1 (Launched June 30, 2021)	1,918
Simple Survey 2 (Launched July 13, 2021)	1,258
Simple Survey 3 (Launched July 19, 2021)	766
Simple Survey 4 (Launched July 26, 2021)	566
Simple Survey 5 (Launched August 6, 2021)	1,331
Community Liaison Survey Responses	664
Emailed comments	189
Comments made during briefings/presentations	99
Comments made during committee meetings	3
Letter	1
Telephone/voicemail	11
Web comment form	136

## 5 Key Takeaways

Several key themes emerged from the online simple surveys, surveys administered by community engagement liaisons, discussion group meetings, briefings, toll work groups, and ongoing public comments.

**The majority of survey respondents agree that congestion is a problem and remains an issue even with changes in travel related to COVID-19.** A majority of survey respondents (85%) and discussion group participants think traffic is a problem on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan area, with some noting it as an issue even during non-rush hour times. The COVID-19 pandemic has not significantly shifted travel patterns for many survey respondents, with discussion group participants and survey respondents (69%) reporting traveling on I-5 and I-205 about the same or more since March 2020. Most survey respondents (86%) expect to travel about the same or more next year.

**Respondents want more information on unresolved questions related to equity, use of toll revenue, and toll implementation.** Commenters, discussion group participants, and briefing attendees wanted to know more about how ODOT would use tolling revenue and what projects it would help fund. Many people in discussion group and briefing wanted to learn if toll revenue will help fund transit, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure or improve local streets that could experience increased traffic congestion. Some commenters expressed distrust in how these funds would be used. Additionally, many discussion group participants, commenters, and briefing attendees expressed strong desire to know how the toll rate will be determined and adjusted. Some asked how non-payment would be enforced. Some briefing participants also wanted to know if there would be more than one toll fee to travel across the I-5 bridge, I-5, and the I-205 toll project areas.

**The draft Problem Statement adequately calls out the main issues that need to be addressed, but some are unaware or disagree about the current impact on freight and sufficiency of existing transportation revenue.** Most respondents from the surveys, discussion groups, Problem Statement comments, and briefings agree that congestion pricing will be successful if it can provide faster and more reliable travel, fewer hours of congestion, and if toll revenues are used to fund projects that actually reduce traffic and improve local communities. Some survey respondents are unaware (21%) or disagree (45%) that there is a lack of transportation funding, and were similarly unaware (26%) or disagree (33%) traffic congestion impacts freight and delivery of goods.

**Climate change is a concern and some see congestion pricing as a tool to address it.** Two survey questions specifically asked about climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. Many survey respondents (71%) strongly or somewhat agreed greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks stuck in traffic contributes to climate change. In addition, some survey respondents (40%) see congestion pricing as a benefit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In previous surveys in 2018 and 2020 related to congestion pricing, climate change concerns were not

frequently mentioned. Among briefing participants, there is ongoing interest to build public awareness around greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles because tolled lanes alone will not address the issue.

**Many survey respondents said they will avoid paying tolls and will change their routes or destinations to do so.** If congestion pricing is implemented, many survey respondents said they will avoid paying tolls. For example, many (74%) said they would not be more likely to pay a toll on a daily basis and 68% said they would not consider paying a toll to avoid stop and go traffic on local streets. Many said they will consider frequenting local businesses (67%) or changing where they shop and eat (74%) to avoid paying a toll.

Effects to local roads from traffic rerouting continues to be a primary concern. Many commenters, as well as participants in toll work groups, discussion groups, and briefings, expressed concerns that tolling will lead to diversion, with drivers avoiding tolls by using local streets. Clackamas County survey respondents also indicated they would be less likely to pay a toll in response to several tolling scenarios.

**Respondents want more travel options.** Although there was interest among discussion group participants in encouraging other modes of transportation, there are concerns about the adequacy and availability of transit as a viable alternative to driving. Many survey respondents (70%) said they would not be likely to use transit to avoid a toll if it would take 40 minutes or less to reach their destination. Clackamas County and Clark County respondents, in particular, noted they are unlikely to change travel modes. Half of all survey respondents said a toll-free travel option could make a toll program easier for community members. Many discussion group participants are interested in a toll-free route and are concerned about all lanes being tolled on I-5 and I-205.

**Reduced toll rates should be considered for people experiencing low incomes.** Commenters and participants in discussion groups, briefings, and toll work groups have many concerns about the anticipated financial impact of tolling, especially for those who are unable to change their travel patterns. There is also concern about inequitable impacts to historically excluded and underserved communities, including those experiencing low incomes. There was support in discussion groups and some survey responses (37%) for a discounted toll rate for drivers experiencing low incomes and other impacted groups, such as for trips for medical appointments.

**Questions and distrust exist related to whether tolling would reduce congestion, revenue would be spent wisely, and how public input would be used to design the system.** Some commenters and discussion group participants expressed distrust of ODOT specifically and are concerned that tolls are not a solution to the traffic problem. Participants want more evidence to demonstrate tolling can effectively be used to manage congestion and there is interest in considering other solutions or transportation investments, rather than tolling, to manage the traffic problem.

Consistent with the I-205 Toll Project engagement in 2020, many commenters stated opposition to tolling and said they do not want this Project to move forward. However, among participants who engaged in direct conversations through briefings and discussion groups, there were constructive discussions about potential benefits, how tolling would be implemented, and ways to make a toll program easier on community members.

**Engagement methods helped solicit opinions from a diversity of groups and areas.** Adjusting engagement methods during COVID-19 helped encourage participation. Virtual discussion groups resulted in strong participation and meaningful dialogue with historically excluded and underserved community members, with interest in ongoing engagement. Simple surveys increased the number of responses from the public. Some public comments expressed concern that surveys were misleading for suggesting themes supportive of tolling without mentioning the drawbacks. Others said the public process was not transparent, as the decision to implement congestion pricing seems to be a foregone conclusion.

Many discussion group and briefing participants expressed interest in ongoing opportunities for engagement and feedback among regional agencies, stakeholders, and the public to help shape the project moving forward.



## 6 Methodology

### 6.1 Data assessment

The simple surveys and full length surveys had questions on the use of and transportation challenges on I-205 and I-5 in the Portland metropolitan area, potential toll benefits, how to improve the tolls, and travel scenario questions. Survey results were combined as a complete set of data (total responses), and also analyzed by county, disability status, income, and race/ethnicity. Questions regarding race/ethnicity were only asked in the full-length surveys that were shared by community liaisons. In an interest to learn more about how people with disabilities are being reached, a question about disability status was added beginning with the third simple survey.

Qualitative data and questions and comments received from briefings and discussion groups were summarized into overall themes.

### 6.2 Data integrity

One of the goals of this engagement phase was to increase awareness of the toll Project proposal, garner broad participation, and engage with as many members of the public as possible. Multiple comments could have been received from one person if they participated in multiple engagement activities. Responses to the survey were not limited by the Internet Protocol (IP) address so that multiple members of the same household or workplace could submit feedback. Multiple survey entries were also permitted so community engagement liaisons could enter paper survey data. No evidence of intentional multiple submissions was found when the Project team reviewed data by IP address. Duplicate IP addresses were checked and most did not have the same survey responses or demographic information.

The survey results are not statistically representative, meaning the respondent sample is not predictive of the opinions of the Portland metropolitan area population as a whole. Clackamas County residents are over-represented in the survey sample, while the three other counties in the Portland metropolitan area are under-represented. The simple surveys did not ask questions related to race, ethnicity, gender, or age.

## 7 Demographics

### 7.1 Demographics

ODOT asked respondents to self-report demographic data (ZIP code, income, and disability status). Respondents could choose to not answer the demographic questions. For geography and income, demographics of survey respondents were compared to U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data (2015 to 2019) for the Portland metropolitan area, composed of Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties in Oregon and Clark County in Washington.

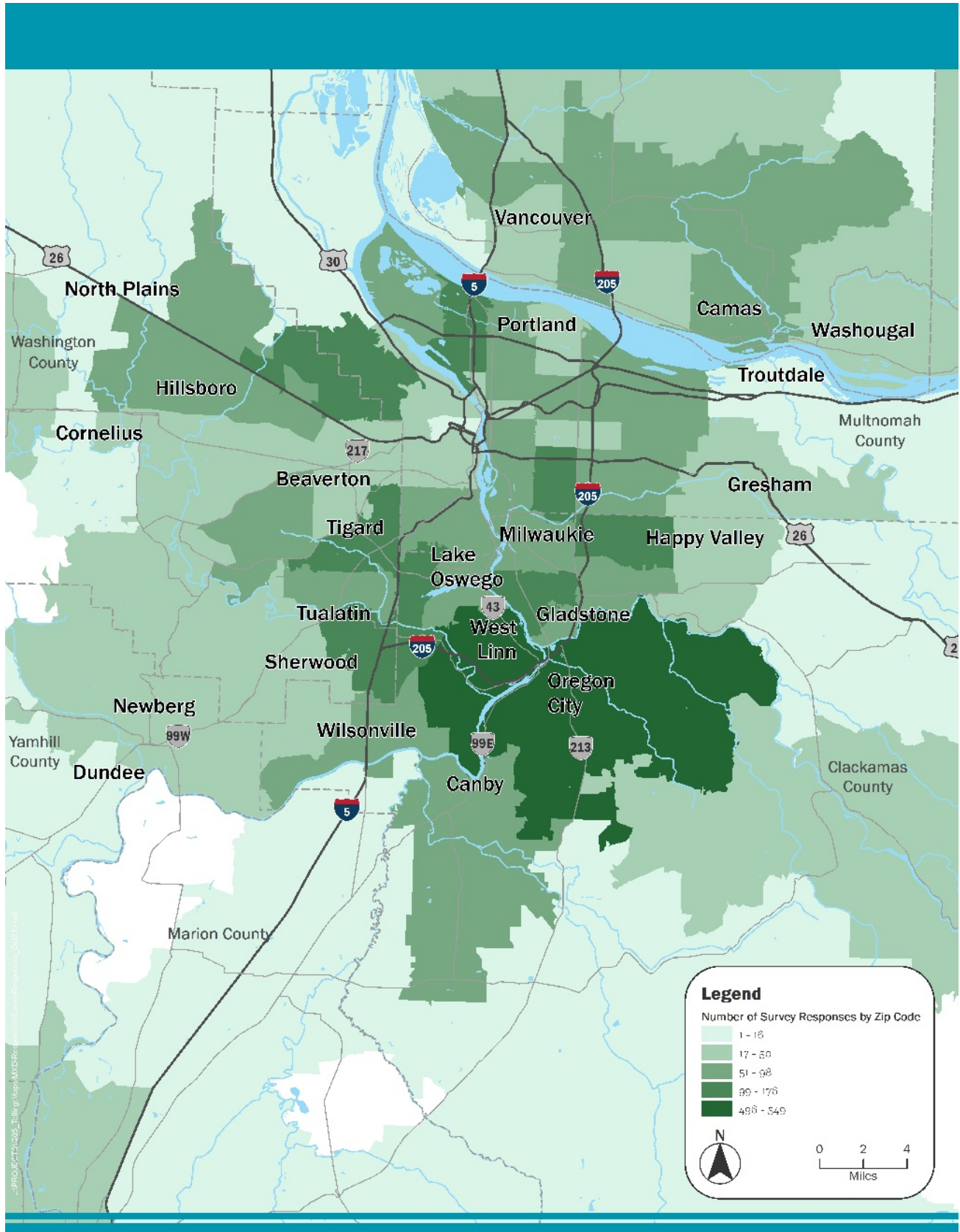
#### 7.1.1 Response by geography

The online survey asked for a ZIP code. A total of 5,833 responses provided a ZIP code, approximately 90% of total survey responses. The ZIP codes are grouped by county in the following table.

**Table 7-1. Response by county**

County	Count of Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents by Zip Codes	Percent of Portland Metro Area Population
<b>Total from Portland Metro Counties</b>			
Multnomah County	1,580	27%	35%
Clackamas County	2,053	35%	18%
Washington County	944	16%	26%
Clark County	769	13%	21%
Other Oregon Counties	427	7%	N/A
Other Washington counties	49	1%	N/A
Outside of OR/WA	11	0.2%	N/A
<b>Total Surveys</b>	<b>5,833</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Figure 7-1. Heat Map of all online survey responses by ZIP code



### 7.1.2 Responses by income

Out of the 5,748 total responses, 74% of respondents said their household income was \$50,000 or more annually and 26% said their household income was less than \$50,000.

**Table 7-2. Response by income**

Income	Count of Survey Respondents	Percent of Survey Respondents by Income	Percent of Portland Metro Population
Total from Portland Metro Counties	5,112		
Multnomah County (\$50,000 or more)	1,069	19%	25%
Multnomah County (\$50,000 or less)	461	8%	13%
Clackamas County (\$50,000 or more)	1,478	26%	13%
Clackamas County (\$50,000 or less)	468	8%	5%
Washington County (\$50,000 or more)	722	13%	18%
Washington County (\$50,000 or less)	183	3%	6%
Clark County (\$50,000 or more)	564	10%	14%
Clark County (\$50,000 or less)	167	3%	6%
Other Oregon counties (\$50,000 or more)	306	5%	N/A
Other Oregon counties (\$50,000 or less)	108	2%	N/A
Other Washington counties (\$50,000 or more)	29	.01%	N/A
Other Washington counties (\$50,000 or less)	20	0%	N/A
Outside of WA/OR (\$50,000 or more)	10	0%	N/A
Outside of WA/OR (\$50,000 or less)	1	0%	N/A

### 7.1.3 Responses by disability status

Approximately 2,900 online survey respondents provided their disability status. Of those, 20% of respondents said they identified as a person living with a disability or someone in their household lives with a disability. In the four counties of the Portland metropolitan area, about 12% of residents live with a disability themselves.

**Table 7-3. Response by disability status**

Disability status (Are you a person living with a disability or does someone in your household live with a disability?)	Count of Respondents	Percent
Yes.	577	20%
No.	2,332	80%

**7.1.4 Response by Race**

ODOT only asked for race/ethnicity information in the long-form surveys that were distributed by community liaisons and did not collect race/ethnicity information in the simple surveys. Of the 664 surveys received from the community liaison outreach, 498 answered the race/ethnicity question. Survey respondents’ percentages in the table are based on only the long-form survey responses to the following question: “How do you identify your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply).” The total will not equal 100%.

**Table 7-4. Response by Race N = 498**

Race/Ethnicity	Count of Respondents	Percent
African American/Black/African	27	5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	9	2%
Asian/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	233	47%
Hispanic/Latin American/ Indigenous Central or South American	76	15%
Middle Eastern	2	0%
Slavic	48	10%
White/Caucasian	66	13%
Prefer not to answer or did not provide an answer	52	10%
Prefer to self-describe - Write In: <sup>2</sup>	8	2%

<sup>2</sup> Responses to this question included: Haitian, Hispano, Indígena Maya, Mermaid, Nothing, Nubian, Ukrainian/Eastern European, Русский



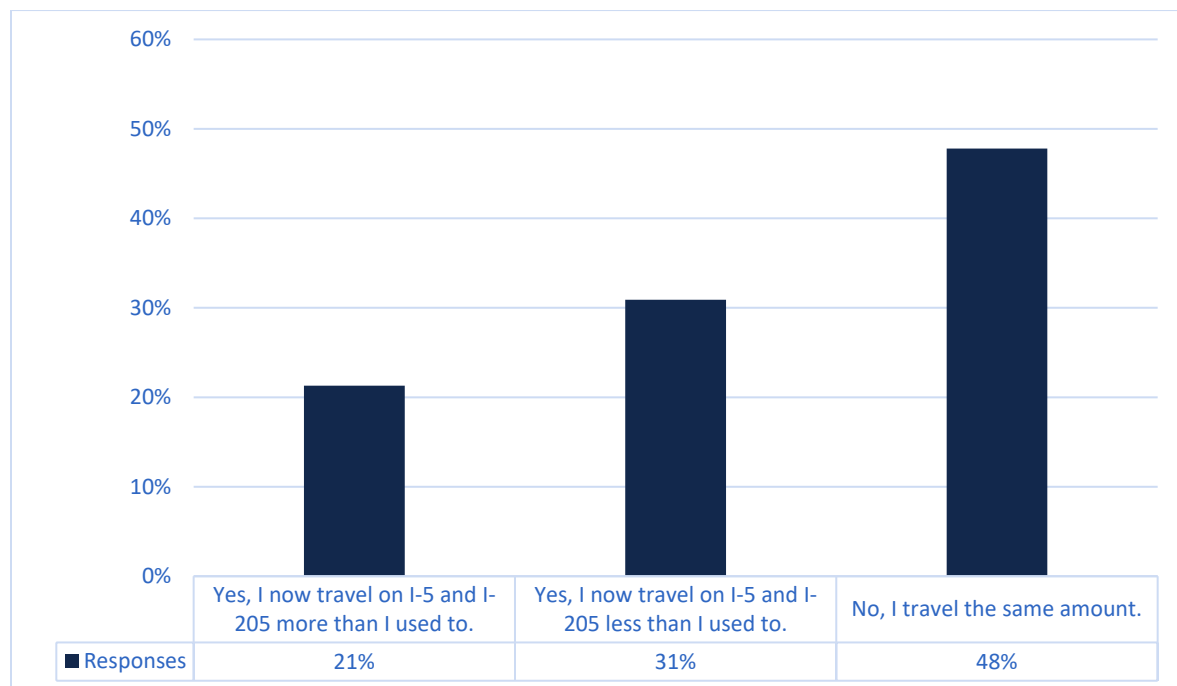
## 8 Survey Results by Topic

This section includes quantitative results from the surveys. A cross tabulation was conducted to determine if results varied by geography, income, disability, or race/ethnicity. In general, very few differences were noted. When the results varied significantly (more than 10%), the differences are called out.

### 8.1 Getting around on I-5 and I-205 in greater Portland

COVID-19 has not significantly shifted travel patterns for many responses. For about half of the responses (48%), travel on I-5 and I-205 has not changed since March of last year and many (59%) believe their travel patterns will stay the same next year. Some responses (21%) reported traveling more over the last year and 27% expect to travel more next year.

**Figure 8-1. Survey Question: Since the beginning of March of last year, has your travel in Oregon on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro area changed? (n=2,559)**

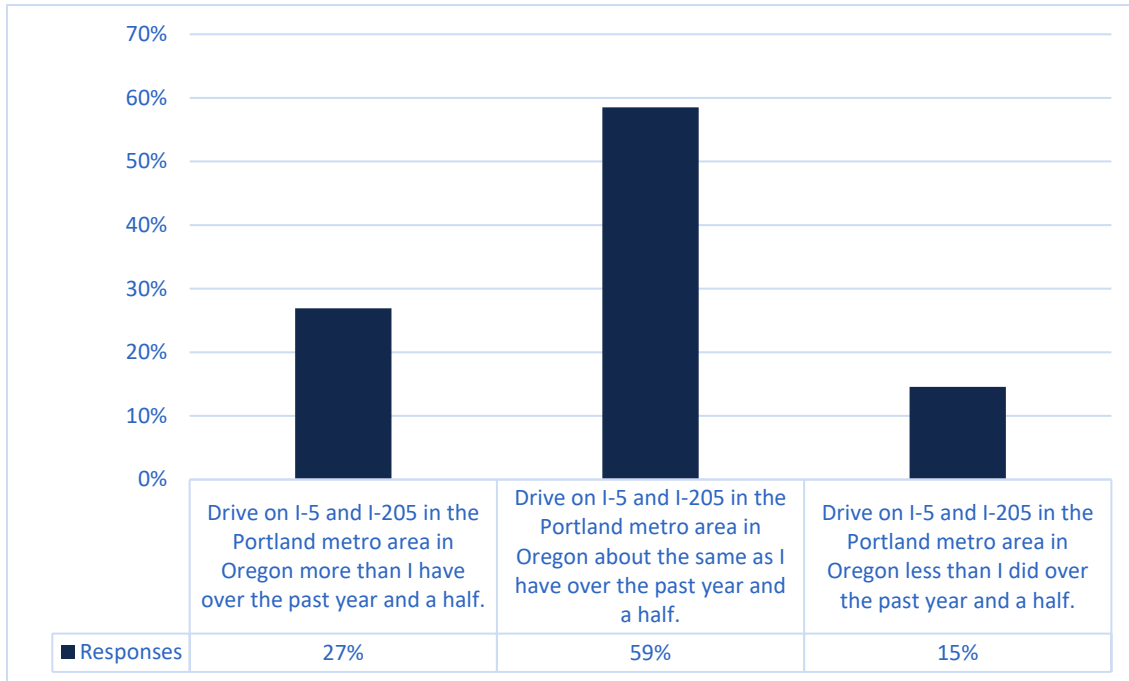


#### Demographic differences:

- There were no significant differences based on geography, income, disability status, and most racial groups.
- More respondents who identify as Hispanic/Latino reported they traveled less over the past year (45%) compared to respondents overall (31%). In addition, more Hispanic/Latino

responses reported they anticipate driving about the same next year (80%), compared to all responses (59%).

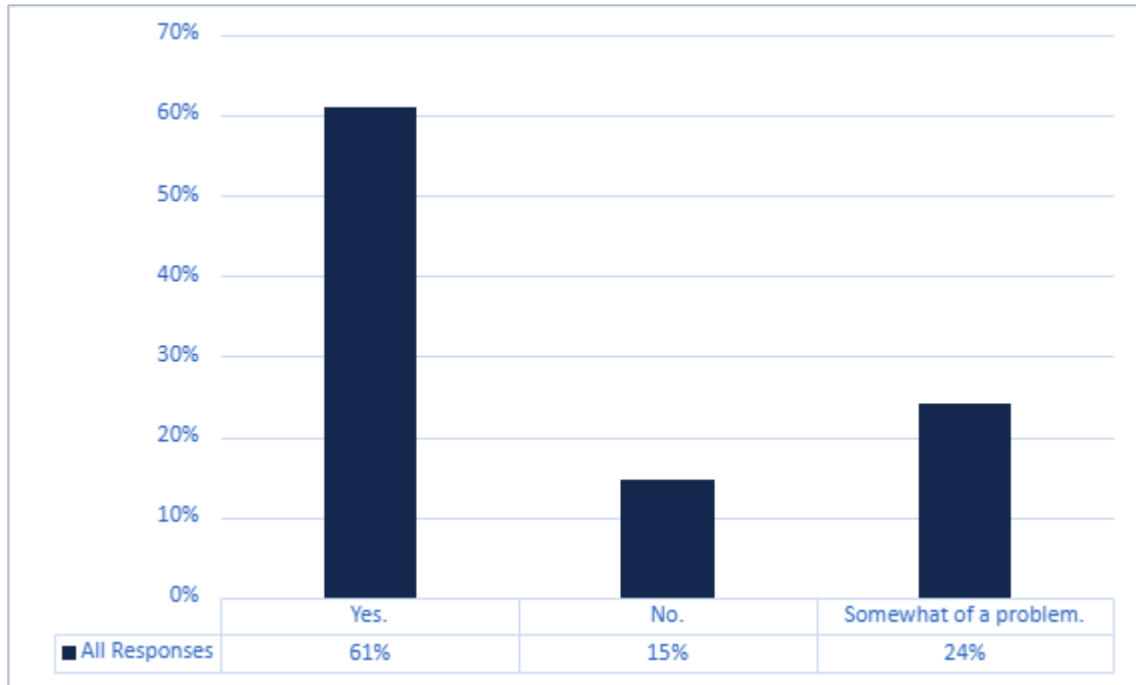
**Figure 8-2. Survey Question: Next year, I think I will: (n=2,555)**



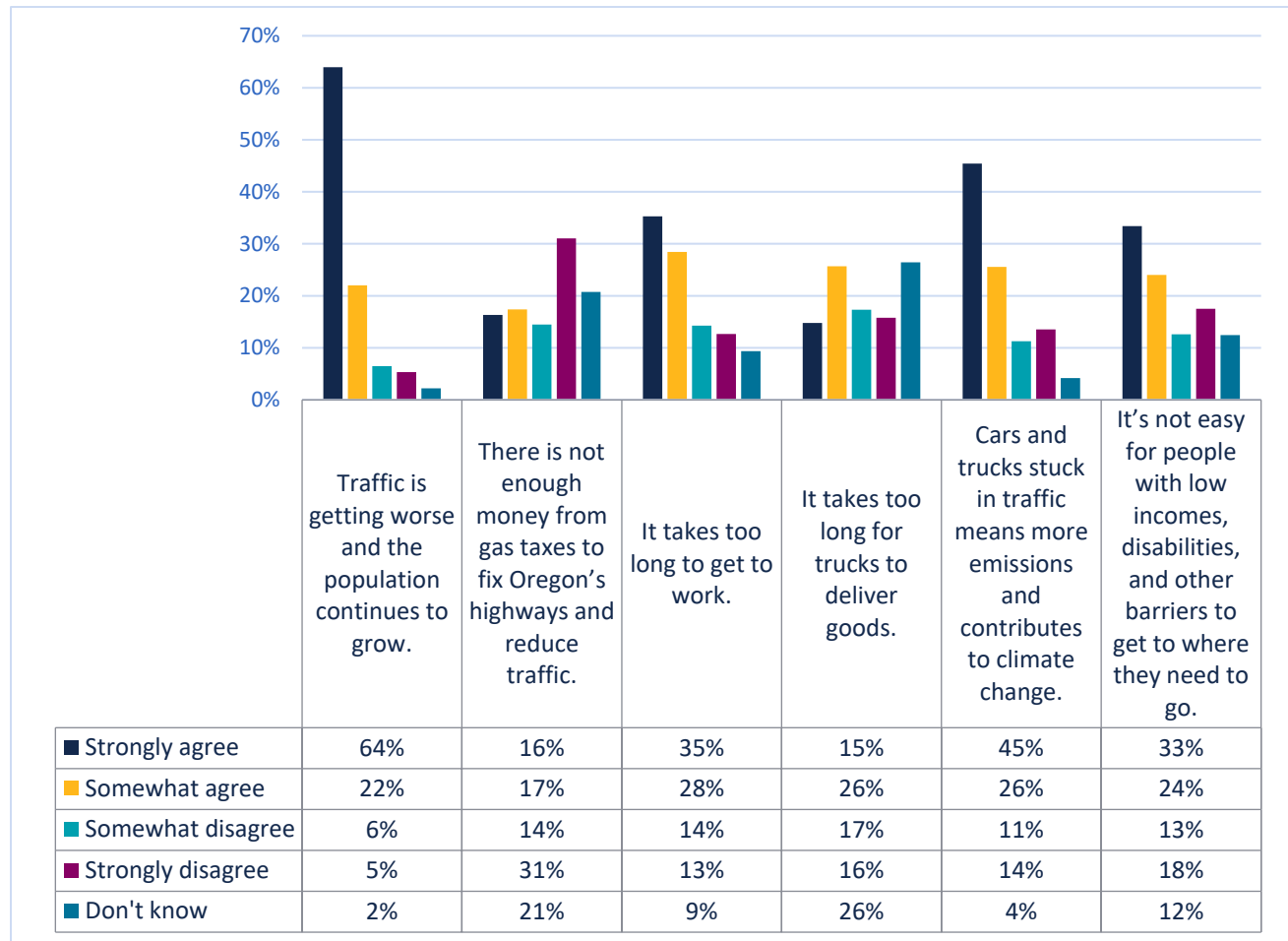
## 8.2 Transportation challenges on I-5 and I-205 in greater Portland

Two questions were asked in the surveys related to perceptions of traffic congestion and received similar answers. Most survey responses strongly or somewhat agreed (86%) that traffic is getting worse as the population continues to grow. Only 11% disagreed that traffic was getting worse. Another question asked if traffic has been a problem in the Portland metropolitan area over the past couple of months. Most responses said it is a problem or is somewhat of a problem (85%). About 15% said it was not a problem. Additionally, 63% of responses strongly or somewhat agreed it takes too long to get to work.

**Figure 8-3. Survey Question: Tell us about your experience on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro area in Oregon over the past couple of months: Is traffic a problem on I-5 and I-205? (n=2,566)**



**Figure 8-4. Survey Question: We have identified some transportation challenges in the Portland metro area. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (n=1,320)**



In response to other transportation challenges, many (71%) survey responses strongly or somewhat agreed emissions from cars and trucks stuck in traffic contributes to climate change, while only 4% said they didn't know. More than half of all responses (57%) said it's not easy for people with low incomes or disabilities to get where they need to go. There were mixed opinions and questions about whether there is not enough gas tax revenue to reduce traffic or whether it takes too long for trucks to deliver goods.

Demographic differences:

- There were no significant differences based on income, disability, and racial/ethnic groups.
- Clark County responses were more likely to strongly or somewhat agree it takes too long to get to work (73%), compared to all respondents (63%).

### 8.3 Community priorities and values

Survey respondents were asked about what key benefits from tolling were most important and could select up to three options. The choices selected most frequently included more reliable trips (51%), fewer hours of slow traffic (50%), and reduced vehicle emissions to lessen the impacts of climate change (40%). The benefit selected least frequently was less traffic for trucks delivering shipments, with only 17% of responses identifying it as a benefit.

Improvements to transit, biking, and walking and providing funding for transportation projects was selected as a benefit about a quarter of the time (27% and 24%, respectively).

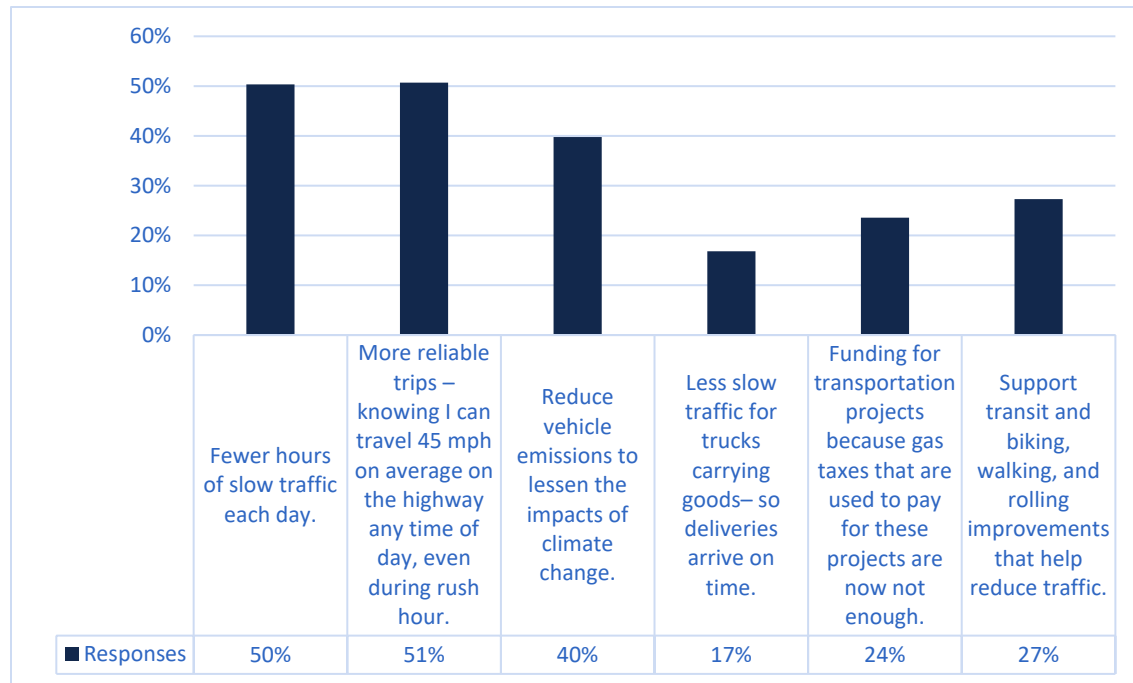
#### Demographic differences:

- Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) responses<sup>3</sup> (59%) chose fewer hours of slow traffic as a benefit more frequently compared to all respondents (50%).
- Multnomah County responses selected reducing impacts to climate change most frequently (50%).
- Clark County responses selected benefits of fewer hours of slow traffic (65%) and more reliable trips (60%) more frequently compared to all responses (50% and 51%, respectively).

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<sup>3</sup> ODOT only asked for race/ethnicity information in the long-form surveys that were distributed by community liaisons and did not collect race/ethnicity information in the Simple Surveys. The BIPOC column in the Race/Ethnicity tables represents the combination of all Black, Indigenous, People of Color and recent Slavic immigrants.

**Figure 8-5. Survey Question: Driving in Oregon on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro area may mean paying a toll in the future. People traveling on I-205 and I-5 will have options. Commuters could adjust their travel times and pay less by avoiding times of heavy traffic or take transit to avoid the fee. We understand no one enjoys paying tolls or fees, but tolling does provide benefits. Which benefits are most important to you? Please select up to three choices. (n=1,825)**



### 8.4 Ways to make a toll program work better

Survey respondents were asked about ways to make the toll program easier on people. Respondents were asked to select up to four choices. Half of all responses (50%) said a toll-free travel option could make a toll program easier for community members. About a third of responses said the following options could help: lower tolls for drivers experiencing low incomes (37%), faster travel times (37%), and using toll revenue to fund projects to reduce traffic (36%).

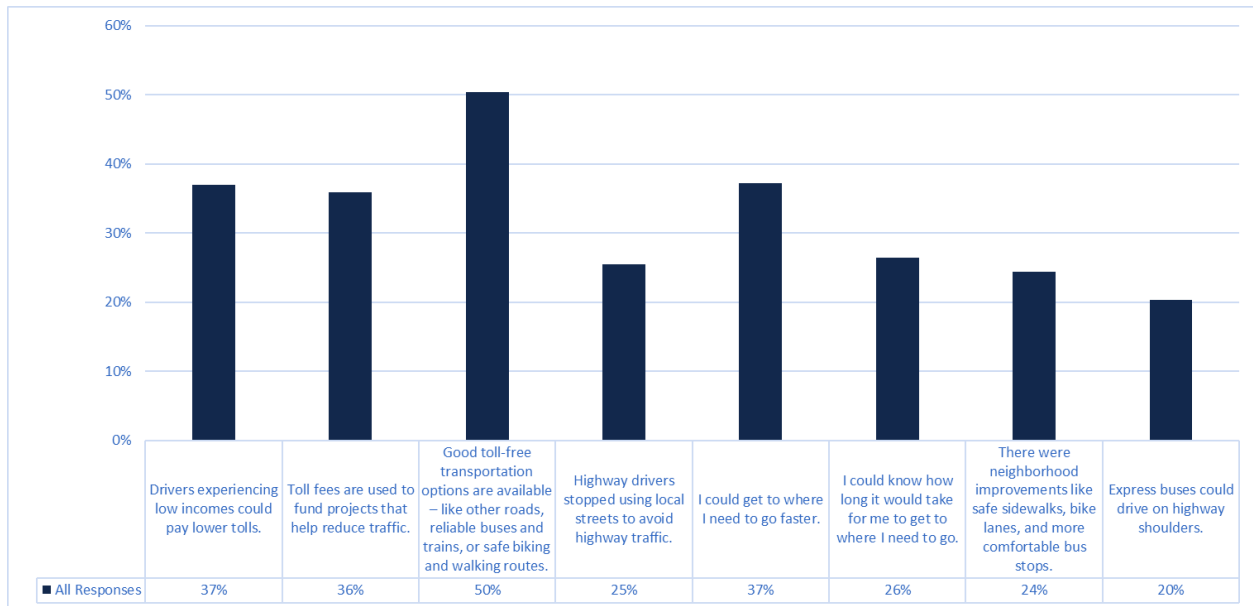
Some responses identified the following as benefits: knowing how long it would take to get somewhere (26%), drivers stopping using local streets to avoid highway traffic (25%), and if there were neighborhood improvements like safe sidewalks and bike lanes (24%). The least frequently selected option (20%) was allowing express buses to drive on highway shoulders.

#### Demographic differences:

- Lower tolls for low-income drivers were the most frequently selected for African American/Black/African, Slavic and Hispanic/Latin American responses.
- Toll free-routes was the most frequently selected choice in all Portland area counties. The frequency of responses for all other strategy varied by geography.



**Figure 8-6. Survey Question: In Oregon, the benefit of paying a variable toll is less traffic and a more reliable trip. If we start a toll program, how can we make this easier for community members? A toll program would be better for me or my community if... (select up to 4 choices): (n=1,092)**



### 8.5 Considerations for designing a toll program

Survey participants were asked a series of scenario questions regarding when they would consider paying a toll, or what they would do if they had to pay a toll on I-5 and I-205. For the most part, responses to the surveys and in discussion groups would not consider paying tolls in many of the scenarios and 74% said they would not be likely to consider paying a toll on a daily basis. However, 52% of survey responses said they would consider paying a toll if it saved them 30 minutes of travel time and about half (52%) said they would not consider delaying their departure time to pay a lower toll. Only 17% said they would consider paying a toll if it saved them 10 minutes of travel time. The majority of responses would not consider paying a toll to travel 45 miles per hour (mph) on average (73%) or to avoid stop and go traffic on local streets (68%).

In response to other travel choices, many (74%) said they would change where they would shop and eat if there was a toll and 67% said they would consider visiting a local business if they knew they would avoid a toll. Many responses (70%) said they would not be likely to use transit to avoid a toll if it would take 40 minutes or less to reach their destination.

#### Demographic differences:

#### Clackamas County answers

- 61% said they would not consider paying a toll to save 30 minutes of travel time, compared to 48% overall.

- 39% said they would consider paying a toll to save 30 minutes of travel time, compared to 52% overall.
- 84% said they would not consider paying a \$3 toll per trip during an afternoon commute, if they knew they could travel 45 mph on average, compared to 73% overall.
- 63% said they would not consider delaying their departure time to pay a lower toll, compared to 52% overall.
- 37% said they would think about delaying their departure time to pay a lower toll, compared to 48% overall.
- 79% would not pay a highway toll to avoid stop and go traffic on local streets, compared to 68% overall. Respondents would choose to divert to local streets – which is among the highest concern of Clackamas County residents.
- 19% would use a local train or bus if they knew it would take 40 minutes or less to reach their destination, compared to 30% overall. Clackamas County respondents said they are not likely to change travel modes to avoid a toll.

### **Multnomah County answers**

- 37% said they would not consider paying a toll to save 30 minutes of travel time, compared to 48% overall.
- 44% would use a local train or bus if they knew it would take 40 minutes or less to reach their destination, compared to 30% overall.

### **Clark County answers**

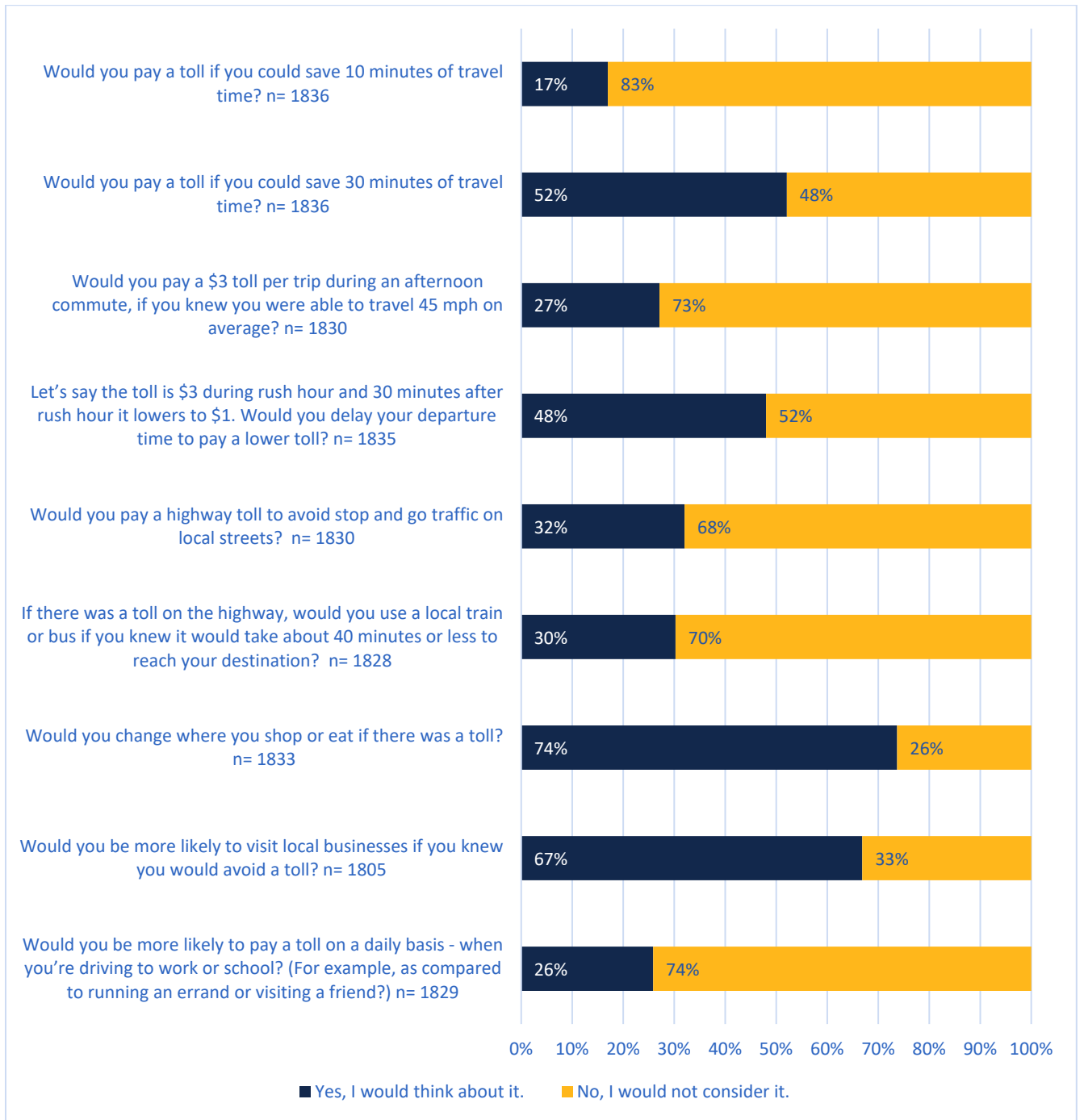
- 19% would use a local train or bus if they knew it would take 40 minutes or less to reach their destination, compared to 30% overall.
- 80% said they would think about visiting local businesses if they knew they would avoid a toll, compared to 67% overall.

### **Hispanic/Latin American answers**

- 81% said they would consider paying a toll to save 30 minutes of travel time, compared to 52% overall.
- 39% said they would not consider paying a \$3 toll per trip during an afternoon commute, if they knew you were able to travel 45 mph on average, compared to 73% overall.
- 61% said they would think about paying a \$3 toll per trip during an afternoon commute, if they knew they could travel 45 mph on average, compared to 27% overall.

- 17% said they would not consider delaying their departure time to pay a lower toll, compared to 52% overall.
- 83% said they would think about delaying their departure time to pay a lower toll, compared to 48% overall.
- 70% would use a local train or bus if they knew it would take 40 minutes or less to reach their destination, compared to 30% overall.
- 63% said they would think about changing where they shopped and ate if there was a toll, compared to 74% overall.
- 80% said they would think about visiting local businesses if they knew they would avoid a toll, compared to 67% overall.
- 53% said they would be more likely to think about paying a toll on a daily basis, compared to 26% overall.

**Figure 8-7. Scenario survey questions**



## 9 Discussion Group Feedback

In the discussion groups, community liaisons posed about 10 questions to participants that mirrored the same topics as the simple surveys. Participants also offered other comments or suggestions for ODOT consideration.

### 9.1 Discussion group themes

Many participants frequently use I-205 and I-5 for work, school, visiting families, and attending medical appointments. The following themes emerged from the comments shared during the discussion groups:

**Agreement that traffic is a problem.** Frequent traffic jams are a problem on I-5 and I-205, even during non-rush hour times. Some noted that driver behavior also contributes to traffic.

**Questions or skepticism that congestion pricing can help address traffic congestion.** There was disbelief as to how congestion pricing will really fix traffic. Some participants wanted more evidence, specifically noting concern about traffic in other places with tolling, such as Seattle, New Jersey, California, and Mexico.

**Agreement that toll rates would need to be lower for certain groups to help make tolling easier.** Participants consistently agreed that they don't want tolling to become one more equity barrier for people with low income, disabilities, etc. Many expressed interest in a discounted toll rates for specific groups, such as students and people experiencing low incomes, and what the process will be for reporting changes in income.

**Concern about the financial impacts and fairness of tolling.** Many noted how tolls will have personal financial impacts and limit the ability to reach essential destinations. There was concern about the fairness of tolls, and how it impacts people who can't change when they drive (such as shift workers, delivery drivers).

**Reliable travel and improved mobility viewed as a core benefit, in addition to using toll revenue for improvements and community investments.** The idea of reducing traffic,

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*In 15 years of living here, I've never seen so much traffic... there's lot of construction, it's confusing.*  
-Black/African American discussion group participant

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*There are not enough bridges or highways for so much traffic.*  
-Latin American discussion group participant

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*In New Jersey I paid about \$22 in tolls for one round trip. You say that charging tolls will reduce traffic congestion and allow for better maintenance, but my experience was that in spite of paying a toll, traffic was very congested and the highways were in worse condition than here.*  
-Latin American discussion group participant

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congestion and travel time is viewed positively. Participants look forward to spending less time commuting and shorter trip times. Participants saw that additional funding for transportation and infrastructure-related improvements will be a major benefit to tolling. Some participants also expressed a desire to invest in community benefits with toll funding, such as grants for community organizations or job training for low-income or BIPOC communities.

**Support for a toll-free route.** Several groups mentioned adding a lane without a toll would help make tolling easier on them and their communities. When presented with scenarios for when they might consider a toll, such as saving 10 minutes of travel time, most discussion group participants said they would not consider paying a toll.

**Reducing emissions is viewed as a benefit among some.** Several participants were supportive of the long-term benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and also expressed an interest in encouraging electric vehicles. Participants would like to see other modes of transportation continue to be encouraged to offset the use single-occupancy vehicles, such as transit, bicycles, walking, etc.

## 9.2 Questions, comments and concerns about toll system implementation

Several themes emerged about how a toll system would work. These included:

- Interest in how toll revenue will be allocated and concern about misuse of toll revenue.
- Interest in toll enforcement and what will happen if toll fees are not paid, or who will pay the ticket if the driver is not the registered owner.
- Many comments about considerations for setting the toll rate, including:
  - Consider rebates and discounts for certain populations.
  - Charge electric vehicles an additional fee because they do not pay the gas tax.

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*Having tolls on these highways will impact people that uses the highways multiple times a day for work or medical reasons. It will also impact the local residents who live near the highways because people will choose to use local roads to avoid tolls.*

*-Chinese discussion group participant*

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*I believe in reducing emissions. This will lead to healthier lungs for people walking and biking, even though I can't use those options. Less traffic for trucks is also an important benefit.*

*-Native American discussion group participant*

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*Can you guarantee our money will be used for fixing roads? How will we know?*

*-Slavic discussion group participant*

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*What if you're leaving work, are you supposed to wait around to save \$2? I am not going to reschedule my schedule to pay a toll.*

*-Native American discussion group participant*

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- Consider providing a higher fee for trucks or restricting truck use during peak periods.
- Suggestion to charge one toll rate, no matter the time, considering that some drivers do not have the ability to change their travel times.
- Offer a monthly rate or pass for those who need to drive frequently.
- Offer an honored citizen pass to cover travel for people with low-incomes and those seeking medical care.

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*Is this project going to work? What if this doesn't work out? What is the alternative to counter congestion besides 'forcing' this project to the public?*

*-Vietnamese discussion group participant*

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- Recommendations to consider other transportation investments before beginning tolling, such as creating alternative routes and widening streets adjacent to the highway.
- Recommendations for community resources, such as translated information and assistance regarding how to pay the tolls.
- Recommendations to seek to raise revenue through other options, such as increasing vehicle registration fees.
- Recommendations to build an additional bridge.
- Interest in seeing the survey results and future opportunities for engagement.

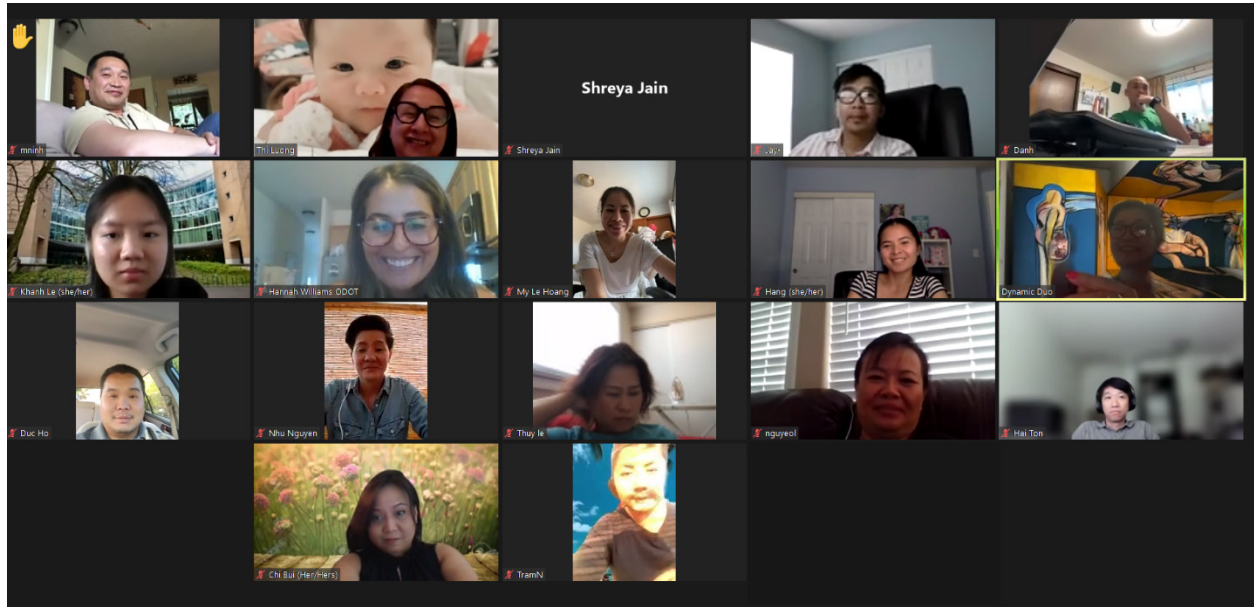
### 9.3 Unique results

In addition to the themes identified above, some distinct feedback was received at the discussion groups, as listed below:

- Participants in the Latin American discussion group commented that Latinx and immigrants will be the most affected by tolls because many live far from where they work and travel the furthest.
- In the Native American discussion group, participants supported bus, biking, and walking improvements that would help to reduce traffic and take more cars off the highway, increase carpooling, and reduce emissions from vehicles on the highway.
- The Vietnamese and Native American discussion groups liked the idea of express buses driving on highway shoulders.
- Most participants in the Native American discussion group said they would be more likely to visit local businesses if they knew they would avoid a toll.
- In the Black/African American discussion group, there were questions and concerns around enforcement. For example, would someone be ticketed if they did not have a tag, how it

would influence traffic stops, and how it would be reflected on their driving record or affect their drivers' license.

**Figure 9-1. Vietnamese discussion group (August 8, 2021)**



# 10 Briefings

## 10.1 Purpose and approach

In addition to surveys and discussion groups, direct engagement was conducted with agency partners, regional committees, and local community and business groups through briefings. The briefings served as an opportunity to share information about the Project, address frequently asked questions about tolling, and invite questions and comments. Additionally, the presentations connected this Project to ODOT’s Urban Mobility Office’s priorities and the overall context for the Oregon Toll Program.

The list of community organizations was identified through suggestions from the EMAC, ODOT staff, and engagement and equity consultants. The following was considered in scheduling the briefings:

- Significant focus on organizations that serve BIPOC and historically excluded and underserved populations.
- Geographic diversity, to hear from groups that represent various counties and areas.
- Focus on groups that have a larger reach and impact in the community.
- Focus on groups where transportation issues may align with their mission, so they will be more likely to engage.

The Project team is continuing to schedule additional briefings with elected officials, committees, and community-based organizations.

## 10.2 Briefings by type

As of September 28, 2021, 17 briefings were held with regional and technical committees, boards and councils, and elected officials. The Project team also participated in 12 briefings with 23 community-based organizations and business groups. Some of the briefings included more than one organization.

**Table 10-1. Elected officials and regional and technical committees**

No.	Audience	Date
1	Vancouver City Council	06/30/2021
2	East Multnomah County Transportation Committee, Technical Advisory Committee	06/30/2021
3	East Multnomah County Transportation Committee	07/12/2021
4	Wilsonville City Council	07/12/2021
5	C4 Metro Subcommittee	07/14/2021
6	Metro Emerging Technology Working Group	07/16/2021

No.	Audience	Date
7	Oregon City Technical Advisory Committee	07/20/2021
8	Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation	08/02/2021
9	C4: Clackamas County Coordinating Committee	08/05/2021
10	Washington County Coordinating Committee, Technical Advisory Committee	09/02/2021
11	Metro Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee	09/03/2021
12	Clackamas County Pedestrian and Bikeway Advisory Committee	09/07/2021
13	Wilsonville City Council	09/9/2021
14	Washington County Coordinating Committee	09/13/2021
15	Regional Transportation Commission Regional Transportation Advisory Committee	09/17/2021
16	C4 Technical Advisory Committee	09/28/2021
17	Oregon City Commission/West Linn Council	09/28/2021

**Table 10-2. Community-based organizations**

No.	Audience	Date
1	Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.	06/21/2021
2	Greater Portland Inc.	06/24/2021
3	Business for a Better Portland	08/19/2021
4	Community Alliance of Tenants and Welcome Home Coalition	08/31/2021
5	AAA Oregon/Idaho and Oregon Trucking Association	09/1/2021
6	Getting There Together Coalition (Verde, Community Cycling Center, 1000 Friends of Oregon, Coalition of Communities of Color, The Street Trust, Unite Oregon, Safe Routes to School Partnership, AARP Oregon, OPAL Environmental Justice)	09/8/2021
7	Multnomah County REACH (Charlene McGee)	09/9/2021
8	Columbia River Economic Development Council	09/14/2021
9	Oregon Environmental Council	09/16/2021
10	Gresham Chamber	09/21/2021
11	West Linn Neighborhood Presidents Association	09/23/2021
12	Westside Transportation Alliance/Westside Economic Alliance	09/28/2021



### 10.3 Themes of comments

Overwhelmingly, participants asked about diversion impacts and how toll revenue will be used, especially if it will be used to fund transit and bike/pedestrian infrastructure or to upgrade local streets that will experience increased traffic volumes. Major themes are as follows:

- **Toll revenue and funding:** Participants inquired about the level of transparency around how revenue from tolling will be prioritized for future transportation-related funded improvements.
- **Local rerouting impacts:** Concern about traffic impacts from drivers avoiding tolls by using local streets and making existing diversion worse. Participants asked for more clarification about the ability to drive 45 mph on the highways, even during rush hour, as this was a point that was discussed in briefings.
- **Toll rates and cost impacts:** There was shared concern around the potential impact of tolling costs for low-income groups, seniors, Black communities, indigenous communities, and communities of color; additionally, there was noticeable interest in toll discount considerations for low-income groups.
- **Multimodal options:** Several questions arose around how infrastructure improvements will be equally balanced for a holistic approach to systemwide improvements to benefit all modes.
- **Transit considerations:**
  - People discussed a desire to learn more around best practices for bus routes on tolled roadways.
  - Others discussed an interest in tolling revenue to be invested in near-term transit improvements.
- **Bicycle/pedestrian interests:** While participants recognized the importance of planning related to tolling, they wanted assurance that bicycle and pedestrian safety will not lessen as a result.
- **Freight considerations:** Concern regarding tolling costs being a challenge to recover when truck routes are directly influenced by customer demand.
- **Regional coordination:** There was noticeable support in communitywide collaboration with active partners and organizations to ensure that planning efforts are well integrated and accessible to all.
- **Local businesses:** Questions about how tolling profits will be allocated and a desire to see revenue invested where it is generated.
- **Other policy and planning considerations:**
  - Affordable housing: Continued consideration on how to use tolling revenue to be mutually beneficial to affordable housing and better connectivity/mobility.

- Climate: There is ongoing interest to continue needed education around greenhouse gas emissions because tolled lanes alone will not address the issue.

### Regional committees and agencies

Several questions arose when it came to regional and agency coordination:

- Many asked if specific intersections or roads were analyzed or included in the project area.
- Others asked about any known impacts of HB 3055 and federal transportation and infrastructure bills as they relate to this effort.
- Some wanted to know if there will be coordination between the Project and I-205 or with the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program.

### Community-based organizations and business groups

Unique themes emerged specific to local businesses and community group considerations:

- Shared concern to not see displaced community members further burdened to pay for tolling fees (in particular those that are commuting for work).
- A strong interest to ensure employees have flexibility in when they leave for work (including shift workers).
- Interest in how frequently toll rate adjustments would be assessed.
- Specific questions and concerns regarding traffic congestion on local routes and potential impacts of tolling diversion, including Highway 43, Salamo Road, Willamette Fall Drive, and Stafford Road.
- Concern about inequitable toll impacts to residents of Gladstone and West Linn.
- Interest if tolling will conclude after projects are completed.
- General interest in opportunities for ongoing engagement and public comment.

# 11 Toll Program Work Groups and Committees

Five working groups are currently meeting to discuss or advise Oregon Toll Program development: the EMAC (as described in Section 3.2), the RPAS group, Toll Work Group, the Regional Modeling Group, the TMWG, and the R1 ACT+ Toll Work Group. The working groups meet on an ongoing basis. In the June to September 2021 timeframe, the Regional Modeling Group did not provide specific comments on this Project and for this reason is not listed below.

## 11.1 EMAC key themes and outcomes

During summer 2021, ODOT invited input from the EMAC on the overall engagement process and community-based groups to invite to participate in briefings. EMAC also selected subcommittee members to focus specifically on the draft Problem Statement and discussion on the draft Purpose and Need Statement.

The EMAC met on June 23, July 28, and August 25. The EMAC shared the following key comments related to the overall Oregon Toll Program, to consider in relation to this Project:

- **Diversion impacts:** Concerns about the impacts of congestion pricing to nearby neighborhoods and transit efficiency.
- **Holistic approach to equity, mobility, and climate mitigation:** Ensure inclusive social resources, safe and affordable multimodal options to access destinations, improved health outcomes, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Exemption and discount criteria:** Establish an inclusive definition of discount eligibility to address equity and affordability, as well as provide incentives for non-single occupant vehicles, such as carpooling, ride-share, and transit riders.
- **Community-informed approach:** Solicit input and confer decision-making to the community to emphasize local knowledge and experience.
- **Toll revenue allocation:** Questions about the equity and scope of revenue investments, with the recommendation to prioritize near-term community-based projects. Some concern about the equity and delay of transit investments after tolling implementation.

## 11.2 RPAS key themes and outcomes

The following key themes related to the Project emerged from RPAS member input during the summer meetings:

- **Diversion:** Interest in how diversion will be addressed and when it will be studied.
- **Support for equity:** Consideration of limited-English speaking communities and ensure all communities are engaged. The Project should both monitoring and measuring “equity.”
- **Questions about implementation:** Members asked questions about phasing, number of tolled lanes, clarifying the toll area, why dynamic pricing is not being considered, use of gantries, and toll rate variability by vehicle class and other factors.
- **Alternatives development process:** Interest in the type of model (mesoscopic versus macroscopic) that will be used to evaluate Project concepts.
- **Coordination with Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program:** Members expressed a desire for the Project team to coordinate with the IBR Program, given the parallel project timeline and questions about toll revenue use. Some expressed concerns about being “double tolled.”
- **Engagement process:** Interest in more widely sharing Project information and understanding the public’s perception of the Project. Also ensuring the business community is engaged – not just business groups, but individual businesses as well.
- **Toll rates:** Consider rates that reflect responses to inflation and actual traffic data collected after tolling is implemented.

## 11.3 TMWG key themes

The TMWG group has discussed this Project during two workshops: June 16 and August 18. From these discussions, the following key themes emerged:

- **Coordinate transit and tolling:** Desire to study bus on shoulder and consider an east to west transit connection from Tigard to Clackamas to Wilsonville. Also desire for a regional multimodal strategy and a separate plan that identifies current or planned projects that could pair well with tolling.
- **Revenue:** Questions about whether funding from tolling will be sufficient to support transit projects and other multimodal options such as ride share and carpooling.
- **Diversion and equity:** Consideration of level of traffic stress on different communities, including the impacts of diversion.

## 11.4 R1 ACT+ Toll Work Group key themes

The R1 ACT+ Toll Work Group held its first meeting September 14, 2021. The meeting was primarily focused on an introduction and project updates. Members commented on the following topics:

- **Process:** Members sought to confirm the role of the group, how their comments would be recorded, and the interactions with other work groups.
- **Priority issues of interest.** Questions and concerns about the Project were recorded to form a separate document that will inform future agendas.
- **Pricing and revenue:** Questions about whether toll rates would vary by time of day and how revenue from tolling would be used.

## 12 Problem Statement Comments

ODOT received comments on the Problem Statement between May 24, 2021 and August 18, 2021. The agencies that submitted comments include Washington County, Multnomah County, Clackamas County, Metro, and Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council. A Portland Bureau of Transportation staff member sent in two comments. ODOT also received six public comments from community members with no identified affiliation.

These comments were incorporated into the “Needs” portion of the Discussion Draft Purpose and Need.

### 12.1 Key themes from comments

Key themes from the comments include:

- **Climate effects:** Several comments specifically note the projects relationship to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Diversion impacts:** Requests to include diversion effects in the problem statement. Some commenters expressed general concerns while others noted that diversion from the interstates is already occurring due to congestion. Comments related to diversion also addressed impacts on communities adjacent to freeways and economic impacts to small businesses and low-income earners.
- **Equity:** Reaffirmed concerns about the equity implications of tolling travelers with fixed income, as well as comments on the equity focus of the Project process and ensuring opportunities for EMAC to provide input.
- **Revenue shortfall:** Reaffirmed that the gas tax and Federal Highway Trust Fund have not kept up with necessary maintenance and enhancements, including multimodal infrastructure.
- **Toll location:** Comments on tolling Hayden Island, the I-5 bridge, and the I-205 bridge to capture revenue from travelers entering Oregon from Washington.
- **Past practices:** Noted that past land use and transportation planning decisions and investments in the I-5 and I-205 corridors have created regionwide inequities that have led to lasting trauma and continued economic, social, and health impacts.
- **COVID-19:** Requests to remove references to the COVID-19 from the statement about economic growth to give the text more longevity as we start to emerge from the pandemic.
- **Skepticism about congestion pricing/tolling:** Skepticism that tolling is a viable solution to address congestion.
- **Additional analysis:** Interest in additional analysis to quantify health impacts, as well as a thorough financial analysis to understand holistic costs.



## 13 Additional Comments

ODOT received 465 communications submitted via sources such as email, phone, or web comment forms and briefings in summer 2021.<sup>4</sup> These included verbal or written comments from meetings open to the public. Key themes from communications submitted during briefings and specific to the problem statement are summarized above in Sections 10, 11, and 12, respectively. There was an increase in communications during this timeframe, due to increased interest and response to the survey. In September, there was also an increase in comments about the discussion draft Purpose and Need Statement issued for public and agency comment.

### 13.1 Communications topics

The following table identifies the primary topics noted in communications from June through September.

**Table 13-1. June-September topics coded**

Issue/Topic	Totals by Topic Code, June-Sept	% of Comment Submittals
Revenue and taxes	145	31%
Public engagement/process	103	22%
Toll implementation	101	22%
Rerouting/diversion	86	18%
Multimodal transportation	84	18%
Equity	82	18%
Trust and accountability	80	17%
Fairness	70	15%
Congestion observations and impacts	59	13%
Economic impacts	39	8%
Environmental impacts	39	8%
Safety	37	8%
Expand capacity	30	6%
Other examples of tolling	30	6%
Other concurrent projects	24	5%
Project Purpose and Need	22	5%
Freight	20	4%
Other congestion management ideas	20	4%
Personal financial impacts	19	4%
Proposed alternatives	16	3%
Miscellaneous/other	11	2%
Goals and objectives	8	2%

<sup>4</sup> Total communications were tabulated as of October 7, 2021, and reflect communications received from June 1 to September 30, 2021.

Issue/Topic	Totals by Topic Code, June-Sept	% of Comment Submittals
Mitigation	8	2%
Project Scope	8	2%
Sentiment only (both oppose/support)	6	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,147</b>	

### 13.2 Communications key themes

Key themes of communications included:

**Many suggested leveraging or increasing existing sources for transportation revenue.** Commenters frequently talked about how high the cost of current taxes are and there was interest in leveraging funds from existing revenue sources to pay for transportation, such as the gas tax, rather than moving forward with tolling. Commenters also shared examples of tolling systems in other cities and how tolls had not used tolling revenues effectively.

**Frustration that survey did not list the disadvantages of tolling and concerns about the process.** There were comments during the survey that it was misleading for suggesting themes supportive of tolling without mentioning the drawbacks. Some perceive that tolling is a foregone conclusion and commenting will not make a difference, similarly there was frustration about the decision-making process and a request for a public vote on whether tolling should proceed.

**Questions about how the toll system would be implemented, and toll rates or discounts.** Several had questions about both the process for setting toll rates, the expected cost, and inquired about discounts for certain groups. Commenters also made recommendations for specific tolling technologies or methods for collecting the tolls.

**Concern about drivers avoiding tolls by rerouting onto local streets.** Commenters, especially those in Clackamas County, noted that local roads were already being used as an alternative to driving on the highway and that many of them are already in poor condition. People noted the impact of diversion on neighborhoods, with the potential for tolls to increase congestion and wear and tear on local streets.

**Interest in increased travel choices and options.** Some supported improvements to transit, bike, and pedestrian options to reduce reliance on cars. They noted it was critical to provide more transportation options that would not be subject to tolling.

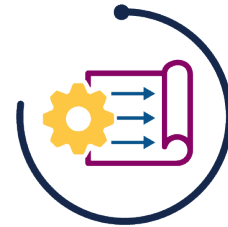
**Concern tolls would have a disproportionate impact on those experiencing low income or living on fixed incomes.** Commenters shared that many low-income residents do not have the option to choose when they drive to work. For those who have fixed incomes, tolls would be an unfair burden and would impact their ability to complete daily tasks. There was an interest in discounts for low-income groups.

**Lack of trust in the project process and decision-making.** There was frustration that ODOT is proceeding with planning, despite public opposition to tolling. Comments expressed frustration on the lack of transparency in planning, where tolling revenue would go, and questioned whether tolling would reduce congestion. People also noted concern that there is not adequate information available about topics such as diversion.

**Local residents and drivers were concerned they would be unfairly impacted by tolls and that there are no other viable routes or transportation options.** Residents near I-205 said they have no alternative routes to avoid I-205 or travel between West Linn and Oregon City. Residents in southwest Washington felt they had no alternative routes to cross the Columbia River. Some noted that there were unsatisfactory alternatives to driving and a lack of accessible transit options.

## 14 Next Steps

Through spring 2022, ODOT will study congestion pricing concepts, identify potential strategies to make tolling easier on travelers and historically excluded and underserved communities, and invite public input. The formal environmental review of selected alternatives is expected to begin in 2022.



### 14.1 Opportunities for future involvement

The Project team is seeking extensive public and agency involvement to inform Project goal setting, development, and equity and mobility strategies. Multiple strategies are planned to ensure the Oregon Transportation Commission and ODOT staff hear from community members in the Portland metropolitan area, including Southwest Washington, before making decisions. Public comments will inform the alternatives to study for the Project, equity, and mobility strategies and, in the future, toll policies and rates.

Planned strategies include:

- Collaboration with Engagement of the [Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee](#).
- Equitable and focused engagement with communities who have been historically and currently excluded and underserved by transportation projects.
- Broad public and community outreach through online engagement events and online tools.
- Briefings and discussions with existing regional policy groups (for example, Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation, R1 ACT).
- Seeking input from technical work groups of regional partner agency staff to review methodologies and analytical results that incorporate stakeholder input.
- Ongoing use of Project website, email, and voicemail for comments and questions.



Make sure your voice is heard! Follow ODOT on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for program updates and ways to get involved. Questions and comments can be submitted at any time to the Project team.

**Web:** [OregonTolling.org](http://OregonTolling.org)

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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.