



# Portland Metro Area Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis Title VI/Environmental Justice Engagement Summary Report







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## Title VI/Environmental Justice Engagement Summary Report

*Prepared for*



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# 1 OVERVIEW

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## 1.1 Introduction

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As part of the Portland Metro Area Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) seeks to reach and hear from a diversity of people from throughout the region because of the project’s potential benefits and adverse impacts for a large portion of the population. ODOT is conducting general public outreach through in-person open houses and online input opportunities throughout the Portland region. In addition to these opportunities, ODOT specifically sought to reach those who traditionally have not engaged in public input processes and those who may have barriers to participation because of limited English proficiency or other reasons.

This report summarizes input received from November 2017 through March 2018, as ODOT engaged Title VI/Environmental Justice communities.<sup>1</sup> Activities included:

- Stakeholder interviews with representatives from six multicultural organizations (see Appendix A)
- Discussion groups with representatives from the African-American, Chinese, Hispanic, Native American, Slavic and Vietnamese communities
- Online and paper surveys distributed by community liaisons to their networks

More than 400 people participated in this equity-focused engagement from throughout the Portland metro area. Seventy-five percent self-identified as low income by having annual household incomes below \$45,000 (to be considered low income according to federal HUD guidelines, a family of four in Portland must be earning less than 80 percent of the median household average, or under \$59,760 in 2017).



*Vietnamese discussion group.  
Source: ODOT*

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<sup>1</sup> Title VI/Environmental Justice communities have been defined by ODOT for the purposes of this analysis as people with disabilities, people of color, low income and limited English proficiency populations.



## 1.2 Context and purpose

Through the Title VI/Environmental Justice engagement, the project team sought to:

- **Reach and hear from historically underrepresented population groups** such as communities of color, low income people, persons with limited ability to communicate in English and immigrants. The purpose was to understand needs, issues, concerns and opportunities around congestion and the potential benefits and adverse impacts for these communities of implementing congestion pricing.
- **Create accessibility and awareness** by working with individuals and organizations that specialize in grassroots engagement; conducting this outreach in multiple languages; and meeting at dates, times and locations convenient to participants.
- **Provide education** about the congestion problem, congestion pricing and why ODOT is considering the tool, and the range of pricing concepts under consideration.
- **Establish an informed network** of Title VI/Environmental Justice community groups/individuals for future engagement on this project.

## 1.3 Participation by the numbers

<b>Stakeholder interviews</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Discussion group participants</b>	<b>114 total</b>
<i>Vietnamese</i>	23
<i>Chinese</i>	24
<i>Hispanic</i>	16
<i>Russian</i>	16
<i>African-American</i>	14
<i>Native American</i>	21
<b>Completed surveys (online and hard copy)</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>406</b>



*Chinese discussion group.  
Source: EnviroIssues*





## 2 KEY TAKEAWAYS AND THEMES

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The top issues heard during this round of Title VI/Environmental Justice engagement are consistent with frequently mentioned comments received from this project's winter 2018 outreach and engagement with the general population:

- Congestion is a problem in this region that needs to be addressed
- Population growth in the Portland region is putting tremendous pressure on the existing highway network and there is a need for additional capacity and development of alternative routes
- There are concerns about value pricing as an effective congestion management tool
- There are concerns about social equity and inability to afford tolls

Differences exist between the Title VI/Environmental Justice feedback and the winter engagement general population feedback. The discussion groups and surveys highlighted the following distinctions for Title VI/Environmental Justice communities:

- Stronger reliance on I-5 and I-205 as primary commuting routes to work and school
- Rising housing prices and gentrification are pushing low income people further away from the city center, greatly increasing travel times to work and school
- Higher degrees of skepticism and requests for proof that value pricing is an effective congestion management tool
- Higher degree of uncertainty about how user fees might disrupt their trip planning
- More sensitivity to the financial burden of paying tolls
- Less flexibility to alter their time, mode or route of travel

Similar to results of engagement with the general population, comments from the discussion groups and surveys fell into broad categories of key themes:

1. Travel patterns and behavior
2. Congestion perceptions and impacts
3. Value pricing impressions and expectations
4. Equity considerations
5. Mitigation ideas
6. Future engagement

Feedback was largely consistent between discussion groups and surveys. Where discussion group conversations raised issues not addressed by the survey, these are called out below.

### 2.1 Travel patterns and behavior

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- Over half of participants use I-5 and I-205 as their primary commute to work or school, especially I-205 for low income populations living or working in the east side of the Portland metro region. I-5 generally was more frequently used for running errands, visiting family and for recreation for these populations. This is consistent with the results from the winter outreach survey, which indicated that respondents from communities of color are 12 percentage points more likely to use the highways every day than white respondents.
- Participants engaged through Title VI/Environmental Justice outreach were more likely to be commuters and students than respondents to the general winter



outreach survey, who said they most often use the highways for recreational or social trips. This could indicate less flexibility in travel times or travel patterns among lower income and diverse populations, assuming workers and students have set times and days when they need a predictable arrival time.

- The vast majority of participants indicated that they typically drive alone, which is consistent with the results from the winter outreach survey. This is observed regardless of income level and especially true for commuters and students. A smaller number travel with other passengers, more often for medical appointments. Very few participants said they routinely bike, walk or use transit.
- Transit was viewed as inconvenient for nearly all discussion group participants, who stated that routes are not close enough to them or require too many transfers and/or simply take too long to reach their preferred destinations. Similar sentiments were shared by a number of respondents to the winter outreach survey. At half of the discussion groups, not a single person indicated they use transit or bike, the exception being the African-American and Hispanic meetings where a third or more of participants frequently use transit, with some indicating they don't own a car.

## 2.2 Congestion perceptions and impacts

- Congestion affects participants the most by causing them to leave early and/or arrive late when they make their trips. Arriving late was the most significant impact, with negative consequences for those who commute every day to work and school, as opposed to those who are late for other reasons.
- Impacts associated with congestion include unpredictable travel time, having less personal time, wear and tear on vehicles, increased trip length and (to a much lesser extent) noise and air quality impacts.
- Currently, diversion impacts from traffic on neighborhood streets do not appear to impact most participants in a significant way. Hispanic and African-American participants mentioned existing diversion concerns in higher numbers than the other groups.
- Changing routes to avoid current congestion was reported frequently by drivers from Washington and Multnomah counties but described much less often by drivers in Clackamas County and hardly anyone from Clark County. The responses for Clark County would indicate fewer available alternatives for Washington residents traveling to Oregon and back.

## 2.3 Value pricing impressions and expectations

- Although there was widespread recognition that the region has a congestion problem, participants were skeptical that congestion pricing will work to reduce congestion on the freeways. They were inclined to believe the purpose of congestion pricing is to generate revenue rather than congestion relief. Many envision drivers still sitting in traffic, just paying to do so. Many also believe tolling will make current congestion worse by forcing more drivers into already congested, but un-tolled lanes.
- The vast majority of participants want proof that tolling is effective elsewhere and will work here. They have questions about how the funds raised will be spent and



want to see those benefits demonstrated. Some people requested annual public reports from ODOT detailing funds raised and spent.

- The price of the user fee is the top influencing factor identified by participants for driving on I-5 and I-205 if congestion pricing is implemented. This is consistent with the results of the winter outreach survey where this was the number one reported factor. Some people wanted to know the cost of the toll first before offering opinions about how they might respond to congestion pricing. For many, tolls are perceived to be unaffordable, no matter the cost.
- There is a high degree of uncertainty about how lower income residents and non-English speakers would respond to tolling, with many indicating that set employment hours are an issue or that they would try to avoid the user fees by driving a different route that isn't tolled if that is available.
- Participants expressed a clear preference for choice. If tolling is enacted, nearly all prefer priced lanes instead of priced roadways so there is choice whether to pay a toll. Similarly, tolling during peak travel hours only was viewed more favorably than tolling 24-hours a day.
- Discussion group participants expressed near unanimous, unsolicited support for directing tolling revenue to highway widening projects such as adding new lanes instead of tolling existing lanes without adding freeway capacity. Many believe only the newly-added lanes should be the ones that are tolled.

## 2.4 Equity considerations

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- Participants had many questions and concerns about equity impacts to their communities. They said many people are less able to afford paying tolls. Some viewed priced lanes as another form of "classism" that favors wealthier drivers who can afford to pay the toll over lower income people with fewer means.
- Discussion group participants expressed concern for persons with limited English proficiency who might inadvertently use a priced lane or priced roadway and asked how this might be mitigated. Lane striping and obvious signage were suggested.
- Some expressed concerns about privacy and the safety of undocumented persons if the process of tolling exposes personal and sensitive information for the government to track.

## 2.5 Mitigation ideas

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- The example of transit improvements as tolling mitigation options in other parts of the U.S. was introduced in the meetings. Participants were less likely to be influenced by the availability or convenience of transit options and indicated less flexibility to consider traveling at a different time of day for their trips. This suggests these participants are challenged by limited access to transit where they live and limited flexibility in the time of day they can travel. By comparison, around a quarter of all respondents to the general winter outreach survey said they would change the time they travel and 15 percent would consider transit. Respondents to the winter outreach survey from communities of color were less likely to say they could change the time or mode they travel.
- Some in the discussion groups suggested diverting toll funds to subsidize low-income transit or freeway commuting as a possible form of mitigation. It was



noted that a \$5 per day transit pass adds up quickly and is challenging for many people to afford. If the tolls are cheaper than a bus pass, then people may prefer to drive for the savings and convenience.

- Some discussion group participants requested that “the state” work with employers to form partnerships to provide incentives for transit, biking or walking, or help cut the cost for employees who commute to work on tolled freeways and don’t have another option.
- Discounts for carpools was suggested by some discussion group participants as a potential form of mitigation. Results from the Title VI/Environmental Justice survey indicated that approximately one in five drivers who travel for work or school might benefit by a carpool discount since more than 70 percent indicate they drive alone.



*Hispanic discussion group.  
Source: ODOT*

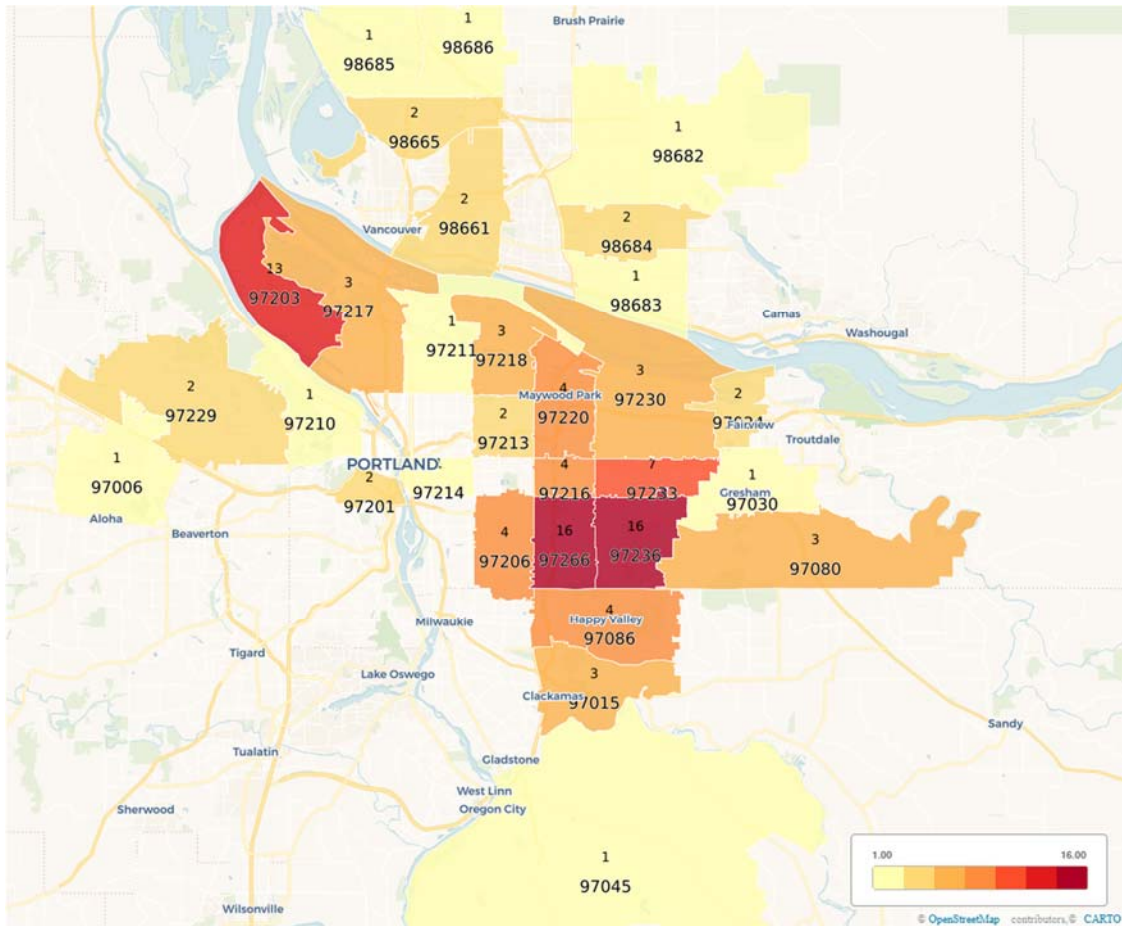
### 3 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: DEMOGRAPHICS

#### 3.1 Discussion group participants

Community Engagement Liaisons were asked to recruit individuals who commute on or use I-5 and I-205 to participate in the discussion groups. In total, 114 people attended the six meetings.

Participants at the discussion groups were asked to provide their ZIP code (in total, 107 of the 114 participants did). Most participants live in Multnomah County, specifically outer east Portland. There was some representation from Clackamas County in the Happy Valley/Clackamas area. Fewer participants represented Washington and Clark counties.

*Figures 1 and 2: Geographic distribution of discussion group participants (by ZIP code and county) (N=107)*



County	Number	Percent
Clackamas County	8	7%
Clark County	10	9%
Multnomah County	86	80%
Washington County	3	3%
Total (providing ZIPs)	107	100%



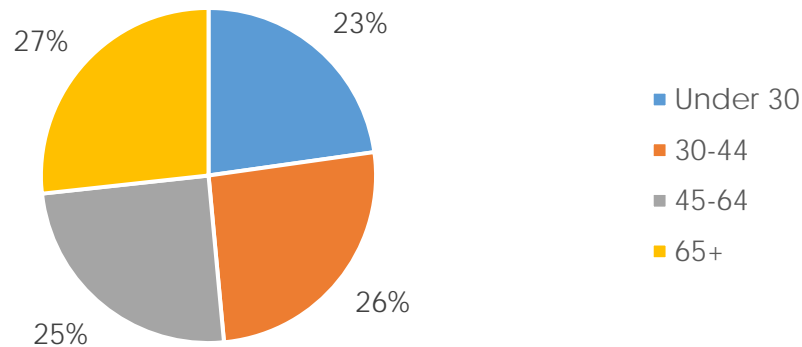
In total, 75 percent of discussion group participants have household incomes of less than \$45,000, and half earn less than \$25,000.

**Figure 3: Household income ranges of discussion group participants (N=88)**

Income	Number	Percent
Less than \$25,000	53	50%
\$25,000 to \$45,000	38	35%
\$45,000 to \$75,000	7	7%
Greater than \$75,000	9	8%

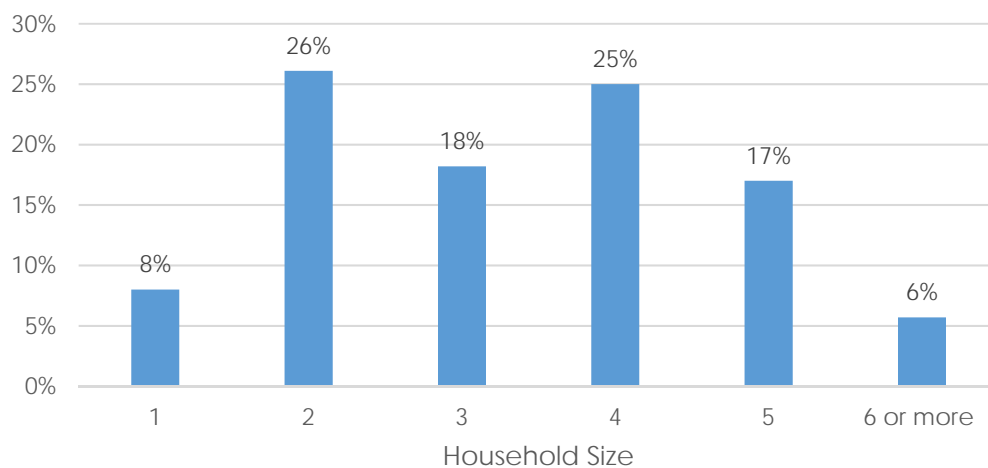
Discussion group participants represented a range of ages, with an average age of 49. Just over a quarter (27 percent) are senior citizens (65 and older). The youngest participant was 20 years old and the oldest was 84.

**Figure 4: Age of discussion group participants (N=101)**



Around two thirds (63 percent) of discussion group participants come from households with three or more people.

**Figure 5: Discussion group participant household size (N=107)**



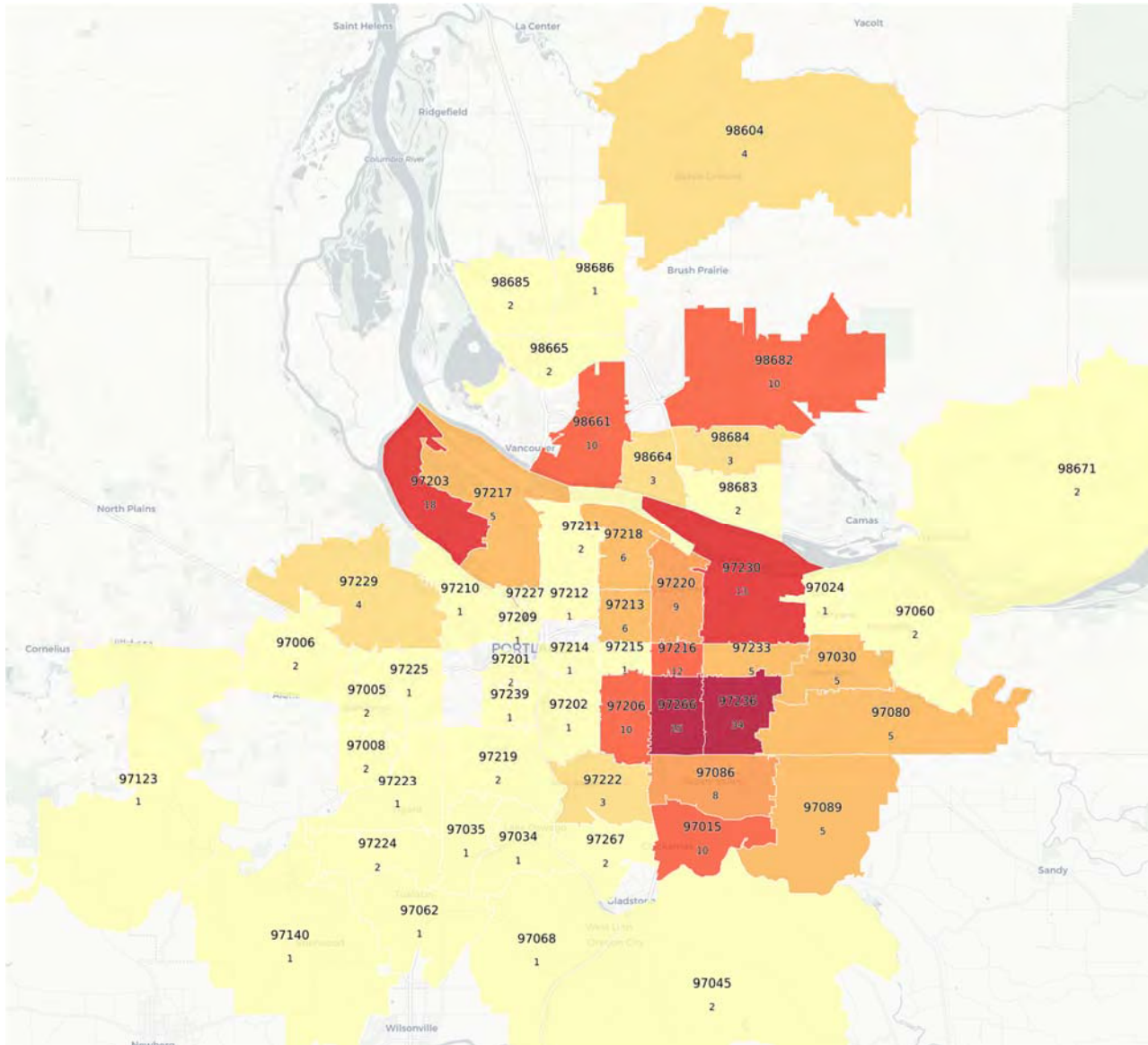




### 3.2 Survey respondents

Survey respondents also were asked to provide their ZIP code. With 286 completed surveys, participation represents a wider part of the Portland region, with higher totals and greater percentages in all four metropolitan area counties than the discussion groups.

*Figures 6 and 7: Geographic distribution of survey respondents (by ZIP code and county) (N=265)*



County	Number	Percent
Clackamas County	20	8%
Clark County	40	15%
Multnomah County	188	71%
Washington County	17	6%
Total	265	100%



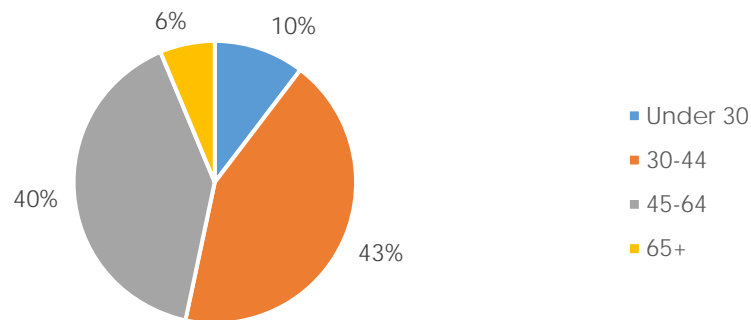
The majority of survey respondents came from households making less than \$45,000 a year (71 percent), though this proportion was smaller than discussion group participants.

**Figure 8: Household income ranges of survey respondents (N=276)**

Income	Number	Percent
Less than \$25,000	66	24%
\$25,000 to \$45,000	129	47%
\$45,000 to \$75,000	44	16%
Greater than \$75,000	37	13%

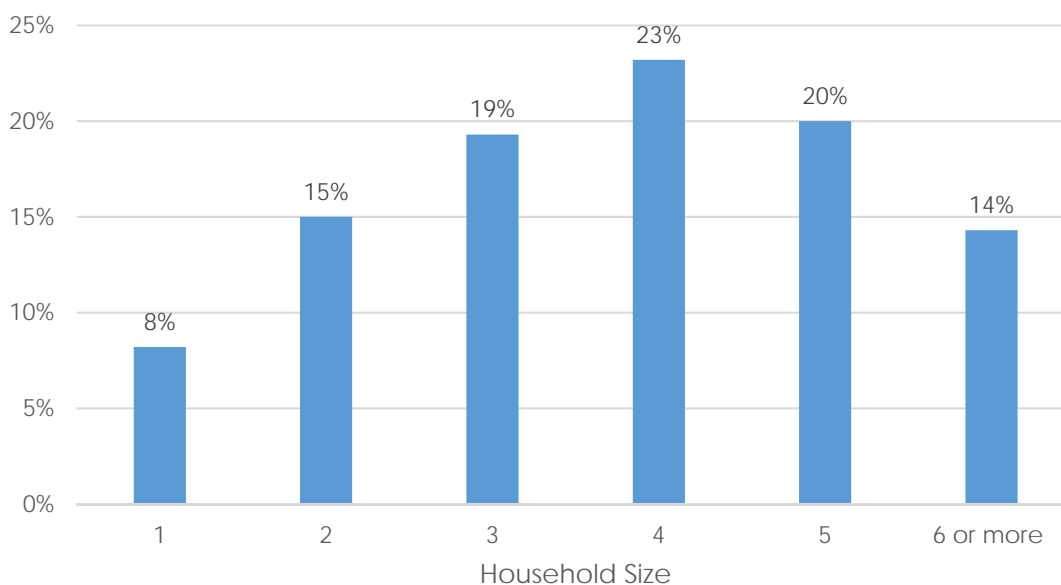
The average age of survey respondents was 44. Approximately 6 percent were senior citizens (65 years or older). The youngest respondent was 19 and the oldest was 90.

**Figure 4: Age of survey respondents (N=276)**



The majority of survey respondents come from households with four or more people, including 14 percent from households of six or more.

**Figure 10: Survey respondent household size (N=280)**







## 4 FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

Discussion group participants expressed appreciation to ODOT for including their voices early during planning. They expressed interest in staying involved in this project and being invited back for future conversations. Each of the community engagement liaisons offered their assistance in re-convening their community groups. Some asked to be consulted at each future stage of planning. Opportunities exist to leverage these community networks with updated, translated materials and additional meetings in the future.



*Native American discussion group.  
Source: ODOT*



## APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

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To provide early guidance and inform the Title VI/Environmental Justice outreach, the project team interviewed select key stakeholders affiliated with local agencies and organizations who work directly with community groups that are least likely to engage in traditional outreach efforts such as online open houses and community forums. Interviewees who agreed to be interviewed included representatives with:

- Coalition for Communities of Color
- Asian Pacific Network of Oregon
- Human Solutions
- Portland Housing Bureau
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization
- Community Engagement Liaison program

Interviews were conducted by phone and lasted between 45-60 minutes.

### A.1 Objectives

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The objectives of the interviews were to:

- Introduce the Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis
- Gather stakeholder input to inform Title VI/Environmental Justice engagement design process and the Education and Engagement Plan
- Identify stakeholder ideas, suggestions and specific issues of concern or opportunity about value pricing
- Better understand methods of reaching potential communities of concern and other stakeholders
- Identify other communities of interest and key stakeholders to reach

### A.2 Interview questions

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The following questions were asked during the interviews:

1. Do you think that congestion is currently a problem for our region? Does it affect you/your community members? If so, how?
2. What is your experience with value pricing? What comes to mind?
3. Do you and members of your community use I-5 or I-205? For what reasons and where are you traveling?
4. What potential benefits of value pricing do you think might be most important to members of your community?
5. What concerns might some of your community members have about value pricing?
6. What are the best methods to include you/your community members in this current process?
7. If value pricing were to be implemented in this region, what are the best ways to reach you or your community members to provide information?
8. What questions or opinions about value pricing would you like to convey to this project's decision makers?
9. Who else should we be talking to about this project?



### A.3 Interview findings

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Several key themes emerged during the interview process:

- Interviewees had a general level of familiarity with value pricing as a congestion relief tool.
- All interviewees emphasized the need for an authentic engagement process
- Title VI/Environmental Justice communities should be engaged before decisions are made
- There is a shared desire to understand potential health and equity impacts to specific populations
- Community members want to see fairness in outcomes (benefits and impacts) and are interested in mitigation options for low income people
- There is a strong correlation between transportation and housing costs: as housing costs rise, some communities are displaced, reducing their transportation options
- It is important to work through and with established community groups and leaders to engage Environmental Justice communities
- Participants should be compensated for their time
- The project team should utilize non-technical terminology whenever possible to increase accessibility
- Relationship building and one-on-one outreach are important for engagement success

### A.4 Messages for decision makers

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Interviewees were asked if they wanted to convey any messages directly to project decision makers, including the Policy Advisory Committee, ODOT and the Oregon Transportation Commission. Responses included the following:

- "I understand the need to address congestion, but I ask the decision makers to consider creative ways to address the health and equity impacts of value pricing on vulnerable populations (e.g. tax credits or rebates for people who have to use I-5 and I-205 for work). TriMet's low income fare is an example of one way to mitigate this."
- "Too often project plans are produced before there is public engagement. Please don't do it this way. I suggest involving the community earlier rather than later. Even if plans aren't set it is nice for community members to have an idea of what ODOT intends or is doing. Work with community organizations to do this."
- "Keep in mind how all community members are affected (social economics)."
- "As someone who works on the low-income housing side, it is really important that we continually emphasize the nexus between housing and transportation. We are becoming an increasingly segregated society and implementing a freeway pricing mechanism only adds to the household burden of people who are being displaced further away from the city due to gentrification."
- "If transportation projects begin with the least able, most vulnerable users in mind, those benefits trickle up and benefit everyone using the system."
- "I hope ODOT will analyze the true benefits and costs of value pricing to better understand who will be using it and affected by it."



## A.5 Engagement recommendations

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Based on this stakeholder interview feedback, the following actions formed the basis for the Title VI/Environmental Justice community engagement strategy:

- Engage diverse populations in this project after the impacts associated with the value pricing concepts are relatively known but before project decisions are made.
- Utilize the services of paid community engagement liaisons who have standing in their respective communities to organize discussion groups and survey low income, minority and immigrant populations.
- Translate information materials into languages other than English using easy-to-understand, non-technical terminology.
- Compensate discussion group participants for their time and schedule meetings at locations and times convenient to them.
- Use this initial engagement as a foundation for ongoing relationship building between ODOT and Title VI/Environmental Justice communities.



*Slavic discussion group.  
Source: EnviroIssues*

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## APPENDIX B: ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY LIAISONS AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GROUPS

### B.1 Community Engagement Liaisons

Based on guidance received through stakeholder interviews, ODOT engaged the services of six community engagement liaisons (CELs) as the core component of the Title VI/Environmental Justice stakeholder engagement process. Four CELs were contracted via the Community Engagement Liaison program managed by Ping Khaw (non-English speaking: Vietnamese, Chinese, Slavic and Hispanic). Two additional CELs were contracted directly by the project team (English speaking: African-American, Native American). CELs were chosen based on their existing relationships, experience doing this engagement and knowledge of their communities.

Community Group	Language	Date	Location
<b>Vietnamese</b>	Vietnamese	March 14, 2018	Lincoln Park Elementary School, SE Portland
<b>Russian/Slavic</b>	Russian	March 15, 2018	Eastridge Church, Clackamas, OR
<b>Hispanic</b>	Spanish (Latin American)	March 17, 2018	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, NE Portland
<b>African-American</b>	English	March 17, 2018	New Columbia N. Portland
<b>Chinese</b>	Cantonese	March 21, 2018	Suey Sing Association SE Portland
<b>Native American</b>	English	April 2, 2018	Native American Youth and Family Center NE Portland

Each CEL was paid for their time to prepare for, invite participation from, facilitate and translate (if necessary) a two-hour focused, in-person conversation with at least 16 and up to 25 people from their constituent community groups. Specifically, they were asked to reach low income commuters and/or people who live near the freeways. "Low income" was defined in accordance with federal guidelines as people earning 80 percent of the area annual median household income (See Section 1.1). Participants from the community





groups in the table above were compensated for their time with \$40 gift cards from WalMart or Fred Meyer.

Additionally, CELs distributed and collected online and paper copy surveys from other members of their community groups. Surveys and the results were translated as necessary. See Appendix C for a summary of the survey results.

Liaisons agreed to complete the following tasks associated with this work:

- Attend a mandatory orientation meeting with ODOT to learn about the project and ask questions.
- Reach out to as many low-income commuters as necessary in any way they see fit to attract 16 - 25 people to attend the discussion group – seniors, students, and youth (at parent’s discretion). Children ages 16 and up could count as part of the number if they actively participate and provide ODOT with feedback.
- Schedule a date and location for the discussion group in consultation with ODOT. Meetings could be day or evening, weekday or weekend. (Note: two were on a Saturday and the rest were on weekday nights.)
- Collect and confirm RSVPs from attendees to ensure participation from at least 16 people.
- Provide the meeting plan and participant list to ODOT at least one week in advance of the meeting indicating where the participants live/work, and how they generally use I-5, I-205 and the neighborhood street network.
- Order and provide light food refreshments.
- Provide guidance/feedback on how participants want to be informed about how their input will be used.
- Be present at the discussion group, help lead the conversation, ensure adequate individual participation and be prepared to provide language interpretation (if needed).
- Utilize an ODOT-furnished value pricing fact sheet (translated) and sign-up sheet to promote the discussion group and survey.
- Translate the sign-up sheets, survey and responses if needed. The consultant team prepared the meeting summaries.
- Identify at least 40 people outside of the discussion group, and representing the Portland region, to complete a survey on value pricing and provide results to ODOT.

## B.2 Discussion group questions

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The following questions were asked at each discussion group:

1. What are your thoughts on each of the five tolling concepts that we have shown you?
2. How often do you travel on I-5 and/or I-205 in the Portland area?
3. Where are you usually going/for what purpose are you using I-5 and/or I-205?
4. How does traffic congestion on these highways affect you personally and do you think it affects others in your community in the same way or differently?
5. Do you change your travel plans because of traffic congestion? How?
6. How do you feel about the idea of paying a toll (fee) to use these highways?
7. If tolls were charged on I-5 and I-205, how might that change how you travel?
8. What would most influence your decision to drive on I-5 and I-205 if there are tolls?

9. What is the best way for us to keep you and other people in your community informed about this project?
10. Is there anything else that you would like us to know?

## B.3 Discussion group summaries

### B.3.1 Vietnamese Discussion Group (March 14)



*Vietnamese discussion group participants. Source: ODOT*

The first Discussion Group was held with the Vietnamese community on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 from 5-7 p.m. at Lincoln Park Elementary School, 13200 SE Lincoln St. in outer SE Portland.

Thi Luong, Vietnamese community liaison with the Portland Community Engagement Liaison (CEL) program arranged and hosted the meeting. Thi provided the Vietnamese/English translations since everyone spoke Vietnamese as their primary language. Dinner was provided. Twenty-three members of the Vietnamese community attended, representing Multnomah and Clackamas County neighborhoods. Almost all (96 percent) self-identified on the meeting sign-in form as being low income according to Federal guidelines (50 percent earn less than \$25,000 in

household income annually). Two ODOT staff and two EnviroIssues staff attended to present information, facilitate and document the conversation.

The meeting began with a welcome from ODOT followed by an informal introduction to congestion pricing using display boards as visual aids. Following the presentation, participants were asked a series of questions to promote discussion. Notes were taken on a laptop and projected on a screen (in English) so that participants could see that their feedback was being documented.



*ODOT welcomes the Vietnamese discussion group. Source: ODOT*

#### Key themes

- Participants included a broad cross-section of daily and occasional users of both I-5 and I-205. Participants use I-5 for errands more than commuting for work, while they use I-205 more for commuting.
- Broad skepticism exists among participants for how well value pricing will work to reduce congestion on the freeways. Value pricing was generally seen as a tax on the driving public.



- Participants asked for more information about how well value pricing is alleviating congestion elsewhere in the U.S.
- Participants raised questions about how much the potential tolls might be, how and where the funds collected would be spent, and whether the tolls would end once the improvements are paid for. One person requested an annual report from ODOT detailing how much money was collected and how it is being spent. This idea was well received. Participants expressed unanimous, unsolicited support for funneling the funds collected into highway widening projects such as adding new lanes.
- Participants generally view priced lanes more favorably than priced roadways because they provide drivers with choice about whether to use them and pay the fee.
- The group generally does not see diversion as a potential impact, although a few participants felt that diversion is impacting them today.
- Participants did not view transit improvements as effective mitigation for them – when asked, not a single participant indicated that they ride transit. It is not seen as a convenient alternative to driving.
- Participants expressed concern for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) who might inadvertently use a priced lane or priced roadway. They requested obvious signage and striping for LEP populations if managed lanes are built.
- Participants in the Vietnamese discussion group expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input and indicated future interest in participating in the project.

## Key questions and concerns

### *Throughout the conversation*

- How is a toll different than a priced roadway?
- Why would you have a toll/fee on one lane?
- If an existing lane is tolled, the other lanes will have more traffic. How will people who don't know the language know one lane is tolled and the others aren't?
- What happens if you have tolls and there's still traffic?
- In California there are toll lanes and the other lanes have so much traffic they have to use the toll lane.
- Has been here over 20 years and hasn't seen the freeways expanded in that time. The freeways have been the same for 20 years. Now more people are coming here. Why not expand the roads?
- Why doesn't government build a new lane, and those who use the new lane, not everyone, pay the tolls?
- Will the new lane be painted green (so people know if they're in the priced lane)?



*Vietnamese discussion group participants. Source: ODOT*





- In California there is a sign about tolling, but it's very small and not easy to understand for people who don't speak English.
- When the toll starts in a lane, must have a sign to let everybody know that it is tolled.

***Option A: I-5 Priced Lanes in North Portland***

- Where will the money go?
- The fee will be for certain hours and days? Or all the time?
- If you go through the neighborhood to avoid the fee if would make it not possible. Don't like it.

***Why don't you like it?***

- I don't have other options.
- I don't have enough money
- How about Washington residents who work in Portland and don't have money to pay, what can you do? It is the only way to get to Oregon.
- Do you have to pay every day? How often would you have to pay the toll?

***Option B: Priced Roadway on I-5 through Downtown***

- If you're low income, just stay at home. (laughs)
- This option doesn't work because they will use the neighborhood and it will take more time to get through.
- Option B is the best option because it will help congestion the most. One other agreed, but just for a priced lane on Option B.
- Prefer B more than A because but the priced road is better than the priced lane. If everybody wants to go to downtown if there's a choice of whether to pay or not.

***Would you be worried about more traffic in your neighborhood if there are tolls?***

- Yes (nearly everyone).

***Option C: Priced Roadway on the I-5 and I-205 Study Area***

- No benefit. Thousands of cars have to go to work, and everybody has to pay. At least if it's just one lane you can choose. It's just going to make money for the government. Oregon tries to collect a lot of money for some reason that we don't know.
- Would like to know how the money is used. You get what you pay for. If you get nothing, it's not fair.
- This option has less choice.
- If the project goes forward will the government expand the freeway because of the money raised?
- Agrees with this option because everybody will avoid the road and there will be less congestion.
- Non-Oregon residents, how will they pay if they rent a car? Don't want to impose a burden on people who visit Oregon. How will we make sure that tourists pay the toll?



- The priced roadway is better than priced lane. If everybody pays the price can be lower.

***Option D: Priced Lane on I-205 from OR99E to Stafford Rd.***

- Good. We don't drive that.
- Husband would use it. But likes the idea because there's a lot of traffic and there's not another road.

***Option E: Priced Roadway on I-205 over the Abernethy Bridge***

- Okay, most people here don't use it. People like it, but it won't raise much money.
- Would tolling I-205 make more traffic on I-5?

***How does traffic congestion on these highways affect you personally and do you think it affects others in your community in the same way or differently?***

- Go to work early and come home late. Tired
- Pay more for gas.
- Baby cries
- Hungry.
- Takes more time.
- Yes, angry/bad mood

***Do any of you live in areas with potential diversion?***

- No.
- Not really in the Powell area, but other streets, like 82<sup>nd</sup> that they use.

***Do you change your travel plans because of traffic congestion? Some How?***

- Show of hands: Do you alter your route? 4
- Show of hands: Do you change what time you travel? 6
- Show of hands: Do you ever use transit (MAX or bus)? None
- No. It takes more time than driving.

***How do you feel about the idea of paying a toll (fee) to use these highways?***

- Depends on the situation. How much does it cost and how the fee can reduce congestion. Not sure yet.
- One benefit is building a new lane. If you toll an existing lane there won't be a benefit.
- Concern is that it will or won't solve the problem. Want to make sure it will solve congestion.
- If you have a fee and there's still congestion, what will you do with the money? Still collect it, or give up?
- For example, a toll fee for a while, and there's still congestion, where does the money go and do you continue to collect it?

***Does the price concern you (how much)?***

- Yes, everybody



- Would like to see a report of how much money you collect each year and what you did with the money.
- Suggests a website with information in other languages

***If tolls were charged on I-5 and I-205, how might that change how you travel?***

- Depends on how much it cost. If it costs a lot they will avoid.

***Any considerations besides cost?***

- Car pool
- Discount for some that are low income
- Willing to pay if there's a new lane. (all agree)
- Expanding the roadway could reduce property values for people living nearby.

***Do you like B because you don't travel there?***

- No, my husband uses it every day. He can go to work faster and has other options like public transportation.
- Priced lane will make more traffic in the other lanes. Likes the priced lane for all options.

***If you knew it would improve travel time would it matter?***

- Yes, if it can solve the problem it would be better, but don't know yet.
- When you study the other places around the US, what do they tell you about the results? Is it working?
- We need information about the other projects so it's easier to imagine.
- More benefits to tolling new lanes.
- Would like to know that the project will be helpful in the long run, not just for a year or two.

***What is the best way for us to keep you and other people in your community informed about this project?***

- Website, flier, all in different languages.
- Add more information on school district websites, in different languages.
- Newspaper (Vietnamese)

***Do you want to continue to get information or talk to us more?***

- As long as you have a gift card (laughs)
- Agree to keep coming and have a meeting like this when you have more information.
- After you pay for the new lane with toll revenue, would you continue to collect money?

***Anything else?***

- If you have a toll-free option, that's good. Must be worth the price.



### B.3.2 Russian/Slavic Discussion Group (March 15)

The second Discussion Group was held with the Slavic community on Thursday, March 15, 2018, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Eastridge Church, 14100 SE Sunnyside Road, Clackamas.

Hanna Grishkevich, Slavic community liaison with the Portland Community Engagement Liaison (CEL) program arranged and hosted the meeting. Hanna provided the Russian/English translations. Sixteen members of the Slavic community attended, representing Multnomah, Clackamas and Clark county neighborhoods.

Several of the participants could speak conversational English, but many could not so the entire meeting was translated into Russian. Dinner was provided. Slightly over half (58 percent) of participants self-identified on the meeting sign-in form as being low income according to Federal guidelines (29 percent are in households earning less than \$25,000 annually). One ODOT staff and two EnviroIssues staff attended to present information, facilitate and document the conversation.

The meeting began with a welcome from ODOT followed by an informal introduction to congestion pricing using display boards as visual aids. Following the presentation, participants were asked a series of questions to promote discussion. Notes were taken on a laptop in English and projected on a screen so that participants could see that their feedback was being documented.

#### Key Themes

- Most of the participants indicated that they drive I-5 and I-205 daily for work or running errands. Just a few rarely or never drive the freeways.
- About half of the participants have experienced tolling in other states and countries. They do not believe it has worked in other cities and want to see proof for how well it will work in Portland. Broad skepticism exists among all participants for how well value pricing works to reduce congestion on the freeways.



*Hanna Grishkevich interprets for the Slavic discussion group participants. Source: EnviroIssues*



*Slavic discussion group participants. Source: ODOT*



- Since most were unconvinced about value pricing's ability to provide congestion relief, they instead viewed it as a tax on the driving public or simply a Band-Aid approach to managing traffic.
- Participants expressed unanimous, unsolicited support for funneling any funds collected into highway widening projects such as adding new lanes. Tolling existing lanes without adding freeway capacity was not well received.
- Some participants felt that tolling would make congestion worse by forcing more drivers into the un-tolled freeway lanes.
- Some expressed concerns that other people coming from other states will not know about the system and would unknowingly be charged a toll.
- One participant represented a trucking business and she feels that the trucking industry already pays too much in fees.
- When asked what would help them get on board with tolling, participants asked how tolling fits into the larger picture of population growth in the region and how decision makers are planning for the influx of future residents. Some preferred to see a slower growth approach as a way to manage congestion.
- There was some support for allowing carpools free use of the tolled lanes.
- Participants did not view transit improvements as effective mitigation for them individually – when asked, only one participant indicated that she occasionally rides transit and she feels that transit is congested too.
- Participants expressed concern for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) who might inadvertently use a priced lane or priced roadway and asked how this might be mitigated.

Afterward, participants in the Slavic discussion group expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input and indicated future interest in participating in the project.

### **Key Questions and Concerns**

#### *Throughout the conversation*

- What other projects are in HB2017?
- Didn't you just spend a quarter billion dollars on I-205 (study)? Then didn't go through with project due to not having funding? (within the last year or two)
- Why are you looking only at I-5 and I-205?
- How much do tolls cost in Seattle?
- Does tolling depend on accidents? Is that why you are looking at doing this?
- Is it even possible to add another lane to I-205?
- Would the size of the vehicle affect the toll fee?
- What does the state think about this idea...is there an underlying desire?
- Would you be able to build a bridge over the highway, similar to Seattle where lanes are stacked on top of each other?
- How would people choose a different lane once there is a bridge?
- Will it bring relief for other things we pay for (i.e. lowering gas tax or other tax deductions)?
- If driving around the city is part of your job (taxis, uber, lyft, etc.) will they have a special pass/tolling fee exception?
- When population increased...congestion increased – why haven't the roads kept up with population growth? Where are we going in the future?
- What kind of feedback has been received so far about this?

***Option A: I-5 Priced Lanes in North Portland***

- There were negative reactions to Concept A. Several people assumed that this option must mean that the current HOV lane is not working as planned.
- What will Plan B look like if tolling is enacted and congestion remains bad?
- Will tolling be referred to the ballot for voters to decide on?

***Option B: Priced Roadway on I-5 through Downtown***

- Why is Concept A, the northern part, not included in this concept? It seems that you would want to make it as long as possible.
- Maybe Portland population will decrease due to this project – people will want to move away.
- Tolling doesn't work.

***Option C: Priced Roadway on the I-5 and I-205 Study Area***

- Rich people can afford to pay in this area.
- Gresham/Fairview will not be able to afford.
- Poor people live everywhere.
- There isn't room to add another lane on I-205.
- The bike bridge (Tillikum Crossing) did not relieve highway congestion. Why are we spending money on that and not widening the freeways?
- People won't like this concept. There is no choice.
- Will there be a trial period for any of the concepts to see how effective they are?
- Will we be invited back when these concepts are refined?
- Should we be afraid of overpricing?

***Option D: Priced Lane on I-205 from OR99E to Stafford Rd.***

- Less concern was expressed about this concept because fewer people would be impacted by tolling in this area. Only two people did use the highway being tolled in this concept.

***Option E: Priced Roadway on I-205 over the Abernethy Bridge***

- I like this one – never drive it.
- No, there is a potential for high fees since everyone pays.
- I prefer because it's only in Oregon City.

***How does traffic congestion on these highways affect you personally and do you think it affects others in your community in the same way or differently?***

- Avoid the highways
- Very Stressful
- Always stuck in traffic
- I must leave 45 mins. earlier than I would otherwise. When asked, nearly everyone stated that they have to adjust their expected travel times due to congestion. Only a couple said they altered their routes.
- I get used to it when I am in it every day.
- Cuts into personal time.





- Yes, it impacts most people who live near the freeways – noise impacts and extra traffic from others avoiding freeway

***If tolls were charged on I-5 and I-205, how might that change how you travel?***

- Most said that they cannot change their travel times or routes but were unsure if they would pay a toll. Many said that they'd have to see what the toll rates were before deciding.

***If you knew it would improve travel time would you support tolling?***

- Free or not free...there will still be traffic
- Prefer a trial of the toll in action.

***What is the best way for us to keep you and other people in your community informed about this project?***

- Have another meeting like this that we can attend. Send us emails or put this on Facebook.
- If you pay us, we will come back!
- Thank you for talking to us; we know we gave you a hard time.

***Anything else you would like us to know?***

- Build new bridges. We need more bridges in this region.
- Don't charge fees for people using the freeways.
- Put monitors/signage around to tell people to avoid the highways when the delays are bad.

### **B.3.3 Hispanic Discussion Group (March 17)**

The third Discussion Group was held with the Hispanic community on Saturday, March 17, 2018, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, 10301 NE Glisan Street in NE Portland.



*ODOT welcomes the Hispanic discussion group.*

*Source: EnviroIssues*



Genie Gomez, Hispanic community liaison with the Portland Community Engagement Liaison (CEL) program arranged and hosted the meeting. Genie provided the Spanish/English translations. A number of the participants could speak fluent English, but several could not so the entire meeting was translated into Spanish. Refreshments were provided. Sixteen members of the Hispanic community attended, representing Multnomah and Clark county neighborhoods. All participants self-identified on the meeting sign-in form as being low income according to Federal guidelines (61 percent are in households earning less than \$25,000 annually). Two ODOT staff and two EnviroIssues staff attended to present information, facilitate and document the conversation.

The meeting began with a welcome from ODOT followed by an informal introduction to congestion pricing using display boards as visual aids. Following the presentation, participants were asked a series of questions to promote discussion. Notes were taken on a laptop in English and projected on a screen so that participants could see their comments being recorded.

### Key Themes

- The majority of the participants indicated that they drive I-5 and I-205 regularly, many for work. A few had jobs driving delivery vehicles and cleaning houses, which requires them to travel the freeways around the region daily.
- Several families attended with young children. Two of the children present had disabilities. These families with children said that everything is expensive and that costs add up. Tolling would be just another financial burden on them.
- Participants had many questions and concerns about equity impacts to low income populations and communities of color who are less able to afford paying tolls.
- Participants were not convinced that value pricing will work to reduce congestion on the freeways. It is generally viewed as a user tax to drive and they envision people still sitting in traffic, just paying to do so.
- If tolling is enacted, all participants prefer priced lanes instead of priced roadways so there is choice whether to pay a toll.
- Many participants felt that the people who would opt to pay the toll would have more means and that those who would not would further congest the two untolled lanes or contribute to cut-through traffic on the local transportation system which brings its own set of concerns.
- Regardless, most stated that if they had to drive, they would look to alternative routes on surface streets to avoid the tolls, depending on the cost.
- There were questions about how transponders work and how the tolls are collected. Several people wondered whether they would be charged multiple times per trip or per day for using the system.
- Many participants did not view transit improvements as effective mitigation. When asked, six participants indicated that they ride transit. Most people felt that transit is not convenient because of the amount of time it takes to get to destinations.
- Several participants mentioned feeling negative and overwhelmed about the idea of the freeways being tolled. This meeting was characterized by an undercurrent of sad resignation among participants.



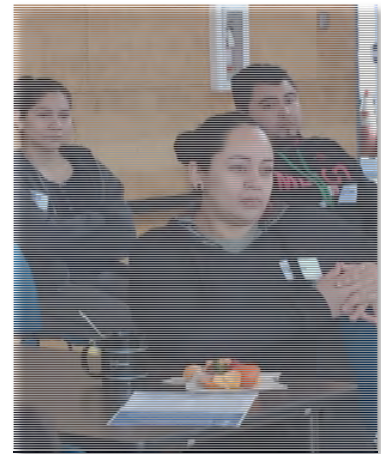


Participants in the Hispanic discussion group expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input in the project.

### Key Questions and Concerns

#### *Throughout the conversation*

- In the 40 places that have implemented tolling, how well has it worked in reducing congestion?
- Will there be tolls from Beaverton to Portland?
- Why are only I-5 and I-205 being studied?
- Why aren't you looking at OR 217 and US 26, which are also congested?
- How will the technology work? Will there be an app?
- What is the low-income population that will be studied in this area?
- How will the funding raised by tolling be spent?
- How much will the toll cost me? When will I find out?
- Do people have to pay twice when you enter and exit the freeway?
- Won't residential streets be impacted by so many people choosing to not pay the toll?
- If I have to get a transponder, do I have to pay for that too?
- My husband has to drive a company vehicle. Would he be responsible for paying the tolls?
- Would the tolls be tax deductible if I had to pay them? Will any subsidies be available?



*Hispanic discussion group participants. Source: ODOT*

#### ***Option A: I-5 Priced Lanes in North Portland***

- Several people use this stretch of I-5 regularly.
- My support for this would depend on the price of the toll.
- Why would you not extend the tolled area further south?

#### ***Option B: Priced Roadway on I-5 through Downtown***

- Two people drive through this area regularly.
- People would divert onto I-405 to avoid the toll.
- I would like for project team to study the impacts for people who use these highways like me. I clean homes and must commute to different areas for this work (i.e. Beaverton to Hillsboro, to Portland, etc.).
- The congestion will impact residential streets and impacts include safety for children, pedestrians, etc.
- I feel overwhelmed with the presentation and you have no answers to important questions (i.e. tolling price, locations, impacts). The possibility of being charged is overwhelming given my current financial burden. (All in the room agreed with this statement).
- Lower income will be impacted by this project. Elderly or people with disabilities will be negatively impacted.

***Option C: Priced Roadway on the I-5 and I-205 Study Area***

- The majority of participants said this option would impact them more than the others.
- Is this to relieve congestion or to make profit for the state?
- This will cause more congestion/traffic.
- I am understanding that this project seems to be that ODOT only wants those using the roadways to pay. Others that don't use should not be there.
- Will the price of the toll be tax deductible?

***Option D: Priced Lane on I-205 from OR99E to Stafford Rd.***

- Six participants regularly drive this portion of I-205 for work and to visit family.
- Would you pay the toll twice (at the entrance and again at the exit)?
- Would I have to pay the toll multiple times in a day if I use I-5 and I-205 on my commute multiple times during the day? My job requires driving around the region.
- Tolls would impact our personal lives such as visiting family members and for recreating.

***Option E: Priced Roadway on I-205 over the Abernethy Bridge***

- Three participants drive across the Abernethy Bridge daily for work and would be impacted by tolling here.
- There are no real options to detour because the nearest bridges are far away.
- Can we choose a no toll option?

***How does traffic congestion on these highways affect you personally and do you think it affects others in your community in the same way or differently?***

- Use more gas because I am sitting in traffic.
- Losing too much time.
- I have to leave the house earlier and get home later due to traffic.
- Congestion increases accidents.
- More traffic congestion due to construction also.
- Public transportation takes too long (1.5 hour) and I would need to take multiple buses to get to my destination.
- Spending less time with family.
- Half of the group stated that they change their routes because of congestion if they can.
- Half of the group indicated that they currently experience diversion on their neighborhood streets today.

***If tolls were charged on I-5 and I-205, how might that change how you travel?***

- Six people said they use public transit today.
- Many others said that transit takes them too long to make it a viable travel option for them.
- Will TriMet raise their fares because of tolling?

- No one indicated that they regularly walk or ride a bike as their form of transportation.
- Six people said that they have no flexibility for when they can leave the house for work.

*If you knew it would improve travel time would you support tolling?*

- I can't afford it.
- I would be forced to pay the toll, not because I want to or can.
- Half of participants stated that they would avoid paying the tolls and use surface streets instead.

*What is the best way for us to keep you and other people in your community informed about this project?*

- Phone calls and text messages.
- Radio stations (El Rey, 93.1, 94.3, KBOO).

### **B.3.4 African-American Discussion Group (March 17)**



*ODOT welcomes the African-American discussion group.  
Source: EnviroIssues*

The fourth Discussion Group was held with the African-American community on Saturday, March 17, 2018, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the New Columbia Community Room, 4605 N. Trenton Street in north Portland.

LaQuida Landford and Rashaan Muhammad, African-American community liaisons, arranged and hosted the meeting. Since everyone spoke English, no translation was needed. Refreshments were provided. Fourteen members of the African-American community attended, representing mostly Multnomah (and one Clark county)

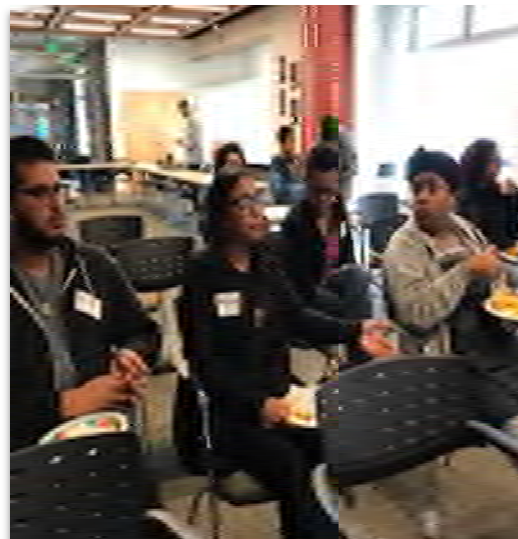


neighborhoods. All participants self-identified on the meeting sign-in form as being low income according to Federal guidelines (40 percent are in households earning less than \$25,000 annually). One ODOT staff and two EnviroIssues staff attended to present information, facilitate and document the conversation.

The meeting began with a welcome from ODOT followed by an informal introduction to congestion pricing using display boards as visual aids. Following the presentation, participants were asked a series of questions to prompt discussion. Notes were taken on a laptop and projected on a screen so that participants could see their comments being recorded.

### Key Themes

- This meeting was equally represented by people who drive I-5 and I-205 regularly and those who don't own a car and/or are transit dependent. Some of the discussion group participants had taken a TriMet bus across town to get there.
- Participants were skeptical for how well value pricing works as a tool to reduce freeway congestion. They asked for proof that it works elsewhere.
- Several participants had experience in other areas with tolls and high traffic congestion. They requested side-by-side comparisons of cities with similar circumstances to Portland that have proven that tolls reduce traffic congestion.
- Someone pointed out that for the toll to actually reduce traffic, it will need to be expensive enough to price people off the road. There was concern that if people are priced off the road then other modes of transportation will be negatively impacted by the influx of ridership and neighborhood streets will be impacted by diversion.
- Participants also raised frustration over losing the prospect of transportation convenience. Additionally, there was concern about the inequity of low income people being required to pay the same toll price as wealthier commuters.
- One person specifically asked, "I need to use the freeway, I don't have the money, I want to get there faster, how do I balance that? What am I going to do?"
- Questions about possible penalties for not paying tolls were raised. Some in the room recognized that letting traffic/parking tickets pile up into the thousands of dollars is not always a deterrent for low income people. This toll would be another undue burden for them. "If someone can't afford the toll, they will never be able to afford the ticket for (not paying) the toll."



*African-American discussion group participants. Source: ODOT*



- There was concern that tolls would go to funding a TriMet jail or a fare evading jail, and there was an uneasiness of this being code for prison for low-income and people of color.
- There was also a concern about the safety of undocumented persons because the process of tolling could expose a lot of personal and sensitive information for the government to track.
- One person observed that tolling is simply another way of injecting classism into society. Many agreed with this notion. “How is somebody’s commute to work more important than my attending my nephew’s birthday party in Vancouver?”

Participants in the African-American discussion group expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input in the project and want to remain involved.

### **Key Questions and Concerns**

#### ***Throughout the conversation***

- What does ODOT plan to do with the money raised?
- Where will it go and how will it be spent?
- Why are only I-5 and I-205 being studied?
- How much will the toll cost?
- Can there be waivers or discounts for people who can’t afford to pay a toll?

#### ***Option A: I-5 Priced Lanes in North Portland***

- I am still having to sit in traffic to get to the tolled lane, or perhaps still sitting in traffic in the tolled lane. The same amount of people will still be traveling, even with the tolled lane.
- Does this mean that the HOV lane doesn’t work the way it is now?

#### ***Option B: Priced Roadway on I-5 through Downtown***

- People will divert onto I-405 to avoid the toll.
- Don’t see this working. It’s very congested as it is now and then you will be asking people to pay a fee to sit in the congestion.

#### ***Option C: Priced Roadway on the I-5 and I-205 Study Area***

- This is the most equitable option: Lower the fee and spread it out to everyone who uses the system.
- Would there be several tolls throughout the highway system? How would it work if you travelled on multiple freeways?

#### ***Option D: Priced Lane on I-205 from OR99E to Stafford Rd.***

- No opinions were offered about this option. Several people noted they don’t travel I-205 in the Oregon City area.

#### ***Option E: Priced Roadway on I-205 over the Abernethy Bridge***

- Same as Option E. No opinions were offered. Several people noted they don’t travel I-205 in the Oregon City area.





***How does traffic congestion on these highways affect you personally and do you think it affects others in your community in the same way or differently?***

- The real impact is diversion. “Just walking on streets near my house now is deadly.” Participants felt that their children couldn’t be sent outside to play for fear of getting hit and killed by cars avoiding congestion.

***How do you feel about the idea of paying a toll (fee) to use these highways?***

- People were really concerned about where the toll money would go, noting that “it never seems to come back to us.” When asked what they would do with the money, it was said that “of course, I want it to go into fixing up my neighborhood roads. There are potholes four feet wide that my car can fall in to. I’m tired of swerving around potholes.”

***If tolling is implemented, can you think of ideas that would address your concerns?***

- There was a general sentiment that more buses and routes should be implemented should tolling come to fruition. This would provide convenient mobility, taking people where they needed to go in a timely manner.
- Diverting toll funds to subsidize low-income transit commuting also was preferred as a form of mitigation. It was noted that \$5 a day adds up quickly and is challenging for folks, and that the new hop pass system is confusing. If the tolls are cheaper than a bus pass, then people will opt in to driving for the convenience.
- Additionally, participants requested that the state work with employers to form partnerships to incentivize either alternative modes of transportation or help cut the cost for employees who commute to work on tolled freeways and don’t have another option.

***Are you concerned about diversion?***

- There was much concern about safety in neighborhoods bordering highly trafficked freeways. People felt that their kids weren’t safe playing outside, and they didn’t feel safe walking down the road due to the increase in vehicles diverting through neighborhood streets. Tolls were viewed as potentially exacerbating a current concern for this community.

***What is the best way for us to keep you and other people in your community informed about this project?***

- Participants indicated interest in further meetings on this topic and the liaisons are interested in convening them. The group requested to be kept in the loop at each stage of the project.
- Some participants offered to share project information with their communities and organizations, such as Southeast Uplift, East Portland Action Plan and PAALF.

***Is there anything else that you would like us to know?***

- Is a third tolled bridge being considered between Oregon and Washington in the region?
- Will new or newer cars be required to be compatible with tolls, and how will older model cars work with the technology? How will ODOT ensure accuracy of tolls?

- There was a question about current conditions including, “If nothing changes, no tolls are implemented, no roads are widened, will that encourage people to leave and move back to where they came from?”

### B.3.5 Chinese Discussion Group (March 21)



*Chinese discussion group participants.  
Source: ODOT*

The fifth Discussion Group was held with the Chinese community on Wednesday, March 21, 2018, 5-7 p.m. at the Suey Sing Association, 8743 SE Powell Blvd. in outer SE Portland.

Timmy Tso, Chinese community liaison with the Portland Community Engagement Liaison (CEL) program arranged and hosted the meeting. Timmy provided the Chinese/English translations because everyone spoke Cantonese as their primary language. Refreshments were provided. Twenty-four members of the Chinese community attended, representing Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas county neighborhoods. Seventy-nine percent self-identified on the meeting sign-in form as being low income according to

Federal guidelines (58 percent are in households earning less than \$25,000 annually. Two ODOT staff and two EnviroIssues staff attended to present information, facilitate and document the conversation.

The meeting began with a welcome from ODOT followed by an informal introduction to congestion pricing using display boards as visual aids. Following the presentation, participants were asked a series of questions to promote discussion. Notes were taken on a laptop.

#### Key Themes

- Most of the participants indicated that they don't drive I-5 very often. They use I-205 more frequently; most of them drive it daily for work or running errands. Many prefer to use surface streets instead of the freeways.
- One participant, a doctor, observed that many in the local Chinese community work in the restaurant/food service industry and therefore are not commuting during peak travel times. He noted that they typically travel mid-morning and after 10 p.m. at night. Most live in SE Portland but they go to work throughout the metro area. All of the meeting participants agreed with his statement when asked for confirmation. Several people thought they should not have to pay tolls because of this.
- The majority of participants were over the age of 50 and many were retired. Many had concerns about the financial burden of tolling on people with fixed incomes.
- If tolling is implemented, participants said they would support tolling during peak hour travel only and not all hours of the day, even if variable.





- Broad skepticism exists among participants for how well value pricing will work to reduce congestion on the freeways. If tolling is enacted, all participants prefer priced lanes instead of priced roadways so there is choice whether to pay a toll.
- Participants asked for more information about how well value pricing is alleviating congestion elsewhere in the U.S., and specifically the managed lane projects in Seattle.
- Participants expressed unanimous, unsolicited support for funneling the funds collected into highway widening projects such as adding new lanes. Specifically, they requested that the newly-added lanes should be the ones that are tolled. Tolling existing lanes without adding freeway capacity was not well received.
- Diversion generally was viewed as more of an opportunity than a concern. One person asked for clear signage for convenient detour routes to avoid paying tolls. Many participants supported his suggestion.
- Participants did not view transit improvements as effective mitigation for them individually. When asked, not a single participant indicated that they ride transit. However, one person asked if more light rail lines could be built along congested freeway corridors.
- Participants expressed concern for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) who might inadvertently use a priced lane or priced roadway and asked how this might be mitigated.
- In a lighthearted moment, when shown the project schedule including a potential NEPA phase, one gentleman noted that if this project was being implemented in China, it would only require two months (laughter ensued).



*Chinese discussion group participants. Source: EnviroIssues*

Participants in the Chinese discussion group expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input and indicated future interest in participating in the project.

### **Key Questions and Concerns**

#### *Throughout the conversation*

- Would it be a 24-hour charge or just during specific times of day?
- Can a waiver be offered to exempt people who have no other choice but to drive I-5 or I-25?
- Is the government going to build additional lanes to toll?
- I use I-5 and I-205 often; is it possible that one lane is tolled and not all of them?

***Option A: I-5 Priced Lanes in North Portland***

- They probably will want to use dynamic pricing to decide the price so that during specific times it is fairer for the people driving.
- It is probably better to charge the whole road because currently the HOV lane is wasted and sits empty and the toll will probably have the same effect.
- How successful is the HOV lane today? Can we see an express lane before we start tolling the lane?

***Option B: Priced Roadway on I-5 through Downtown***

- This option would not affect many people in this community.
- This is not as fair because you have no choice.

***Option C: Priced Roadway on the I-5 and I-205 Study Area***

- After you start tolling, you'll never take it back.
- If everyone pays, then what is the big difference?
- If the fee is low then can't everyone afford it?
- This option, if all lanes are tolled, the people who are driving this area have no choice and have to pay the fee, so the congestion is not solved.
- This just means we have no choice.
- Every time I use this area, especially 205, during the busy time it is very congested. This plan seems like the best funding for the government, not much benefit for people because they do not have a choice. This will make a lot of people upset because they have no choice. A lot of frustration. This doesn't feel like democracy. I suggest using a priced lane in this whole area to offer more of a choice. If you're in a hurry then you can choose to use the toll lane and if you're not in a hurry you can wait longer and not pay. This should be able to help relieve the traffic congestion. I prefer the priced lane in the study area. (Most of the room agreed because they wanted choice.)
- One woman, who did not agree with the previous statement, said if you build additional lanes for the toll, it's fine – people can have choice. If you use the existing lanes and toll one of the two lanes, the traffic congestion will be even worse. Build additional toll lanes instead of using existing lanes for tolls. Do not decrease the options for lanes; it will make congestion much worse.
- It's a good idea to build extra lanes (everyone agreed).

***Option D: Priced Lane on I-205 from OR99E to Stafford Rd.***

- Not much reaction – this option only affects four people in the room.

***Option E: Priced Roadway on I-205 over the Abernethy Bridge***

- I agree that during congested times you should collect a fee, but I drive this way in the middle of the night. It would not be fair to charge me a fee at that time.

***How does traffic congestion on these highways affect you personally and do you think it affects others in your community in the same way or differently?***

- I live in Milwaukie so I can take surface streets.



- I live in Beaverton and drive to 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue very often. Normally, I can drive 84 to 205 and get to 82<sup>nd</sup> very quickly unless during rush hour. To avoid the freeway, I drive Powell. But now Ross Island Bridge is also very congested. It makes me very upset. I commute between Beaverton and 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The traffic makes it very difficult and is very stressful and I need something to help relieve stress.
- From what I understand, is that from Columbia River on the I-5 to Tualatin, that section is always congested. Is the intention behind this study to solve congestion or raise money? My suggestion is that the only way to solve the problem is to add additional lanes. Create diversion signs to help drivers take other routes to detour around congestion. Make it really obvious how to avoid the toll. If you collect a fee and don't solve congestion, then it doesn't work. If people live in Vancouver and work in Portland then they don't ever have an option besides those roads during peak hours. That is a lot of money to have to pay every day. To solve this problem, maybe you can offer a waived fee or a pass to exempt the fee for people who have to drive all the time.
- It is unfair for Oregon to have to pay and yet get Washington exempt? Not fair.
- I am retired, I worked very hard my whole life and I now have a fixed income. It is unfair for people, who don't work ever to get a bigger financial relief than I get.
- In China, they use techniques during certain hours; specific cars cannot use the roads during specific times. For example, even numbered license plates aren't allowed to use certain roads during certain days and vice versa.
- Keep the lanes free, if you want to collect a fee then build a new lane.

***How do you feel about the idea of paying a toll (fee) to use these highways?***

- Depends on the situation. How much does it cost and how the fee can reduce congestion. Not sure yet.
- One benefit is building a new lane. If you toll an existing lane there won't be a benefit.
- Concern is that it won't solve the problem. Want to make sure it will solve congestion.
- If you have a fee and there's still congestion, what will you do with the money? Still collect it, or give it back?
- For example, a toll fee for a while, and there's still congestion, where does the money go and do you continue to collect it?

***If tolls were charged on I-5 and I-205, how might that change how you travel?***

- Seven people said they would avoid the freeway if they can. Many said they avoid the freeways now.
- I would have to move, I couldn't afford it.

***If you knew it would improve travel time would you support tolling?***

- Depends on the price.
- All the traffic congestion is always during the commuting hours 6-9 and 3-7. The rest of the time it is okay. Tolls shouldn't happen all the time. Traffic during those hours comes from people going downtown to work. The government should change their working schedule to spread out when people commute to work.



- Another problem is that we don't have enough bridges across the river. Another bridge would solve all the problems.
- Would like to know that the project will be helpful in the long run, not just for a year or two.

***What is the best way for us to keep you and other people in your community informed about this project?***

- Have another meeting like this that we can attend.
- Newspaper (Chinese)

***Anything else you would like us to know?***

- Portland, Oregon's population is growing quickly with lots of people moving here. More houses are being built and property taxes are rising higher than other places. Where do property taxes go and does this money go to funding road improvements?
- What happens if I accidentally go on a tolled road and don't know it? How will I know which lane is a tolled lane? It needs to be very obvious for me so that I do not accidentally drive in a tolled lane.
- Emphasis on signage being VERY clear about which lanes are tolled and how much people are expected to pay in the tolled lanes.
- In California, if someone doesn't have the device to pay the fee, how does the fee get paid? What about when they send you a bill and you're a foreign driver, how do they pay the bill?
- A big issue is also that two lanes are not enough for the amount of cars during rush hour between exit 12 and exit 8 on I-205. It's currently too narrow.
- To solve congestion you need to build more lanes because two lanes are just not enough, especially to add a toll to one lane or more.
- Get Artificial Intelligence involved for fee charging. It will be good, it will be charting the travelers and frequency of use, and it will be fairer. It will track the timing, and people will know when it is expensive. A universal charge is not good.

### **B.3.6 Native American Discussion Group (April 2)**



*Native American discussion group.  
Source: ODOT*



The sixth and final discussion group was held with the Native American community on Monday, April 2, 2018, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the office of the Native American Youth and Family Center on NE Columbia Blvd. in northeast Portland.

Cary Watters, NAYA community engagement coordinator and Native American community liaison, arranged and hosted the meeting. Since everyone spoke English, no translation was needed. Dinner was provided. Twenty-one members of the Native American community attended, representing multiple tribal nations through participation from 14 different tribes (Cherokee, Blackfeet, Navajo, Lakota, Shoshone Bannock, Celilo, Ute, Carrizo, Choctaw, Tolowa, Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Athabascan, Santee Sioux, Oglala Lakota). Five people indicated they live in Clark County; the rest live in Multnomah.

Almost 80 percent of the participants self-identified on the meeting sign-in form as being low income according to Federal guidelines (47 percent are in households earning less than \$25,000 annually). Two ODOT staff and two EnviroIssues staff attended to present information, facilitate and document the conversation.

The meeting began with a welcome from ODOT followed by an informal introduction to congestion pricing using display boards as visual aids. Following the presentation, participants were asked a series of questions to prompt discussion. Notes were taken on a laptop and projected on a screen so that participants could see their comments being recorded.

### Key Themes

- All participants agreed that congestion in the Portland area is getting worse and negatively affecting people's lives.
- Of the 21 participants at this discussion group, 16 indicated that they drive I-5 and/or I-205 daily. Some people said that they routinely divert to surface streets to avoid freeway congestion even though the freeway provides the most direct route to their destination.
- This group was very price sensitive toward the idea of paying tolls to commute and travel around the region for individuals and families who are struggling financially. The connection between affordable housing and job location was well understood by participants, who feel the poor are paying the biggest price for the current housing crisis. They feel that tolls would only make the financial burden worse for them.
- A number of participants provided personal stories describing the tradeoffs and personal sacrifices they would be making if they were forced to limit their travel to avoid tolls.
- Participants were skeptical for how well value pricing works as a tool to reduce freeway congestion. They also indicated that they don't trust the government to manage a tolling system well or use the funds collected in a transparent manner.
- Participants expressed some support for funneling tolling funds collected into highway improvements. Building a third major bridge connecting Vancouver and Portland was a popular suggestion.
- Several people expressed concerns that visitors to Portland and persons with limited English proficiency might inadvertently use a priced lane or roadway and be charged without their knowledge. One woman told a story about visiting



relatives in Dallas and returning to Portland to find a \$60 toll bill in the mail from her rental car company in Texas.

Participants in the Native American discussion group expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input in the project and want to remain involved.

## Key Questions and Concerns

### *Throughout the conversation*

- Are you also studying health effects or road rage due to congestion?
- Is this just to raise money to build a new bridge? That's what is needed. Otherwise, tolling will add to the congestion that's already there.
- It doesn't help that we only have three lanes. Seattle has 5 lanes.
- More exits give drivers more options to move around. The amount of exits on I-84 is lacking. Westbound, 181<sup>st</sup> Ave. is the last exit until Hollywood. That's a contributor. People might get off sooner if there were more exits that match the eastbound exits.
- Do we know how much extra freight traffic on the freeways has been caused by the closing of Port of Portland container shipping?
- Who is on the PAC and are there any representatives from Washington?
- How much will the tolls cost?
- Was there consideration of climate change and how is it weighted in the decision-making process?
- Why isn't another bridge part of the plan? They've built other new bridges in Portland (Sellwood, Tillikum). It affects the whole route between Mexico and Canada.



State Rep. Tawna Sanchez speaking at the Native American discussion group.

Source: EnviroIssues

### *Option A: I-5 Priced Lanes in North Portland*

- Six people said they use this stretch of highway daily for commuting or personal trips.
- Could you still carpool in the HOV lane under this concept?
- It's eliminating the carpool lane for a toll lane?
- If you're driving in the carpool lane, they can fine you now.
- It would discourage carpooling and increase congestion.
- How would they designate if you pay or don't pay?
- It would reduce congestion for those who can pay. An upper-class lane and others are stuck in traffic. We're still sitting in traffic.
- Would commercial vehicles pay more or the same toll as low wage workers?
- Tolls are benefitting Oregon. The people paying are from WA. How does it affect small businesses in Portland if people no longer want to drive in and pay a toll to





shop at Oregon businesses? Portland has a lot of small businesses and those are the ones that will suffer the most.

- Are you talking to people in Clark County about this?

### ***Option B: Priced Roadway on I-5 through Downtown***

- Ten people said they use this stretch of highway daily for commuting or personal trips.
- They use a lot of the HOV lanes in WA. It seems to work. Why have people pay if you can use an HOV lane?
- I don't like the priced roadway because it's going to disenfranchise our communities even more. Any concept that moves forward should be a priced lane. The priced roadway would further divide our community. Many agreed.
- When you toll all the lanes in that section you create a need for diversion. Concern with air quality on side roads and the ability of people to move through local streets. People will use MLK. I don't go to that part of town because of the amount of congestion. I definitely won't go if I have to pay. Choice is important.
- You don't get to go downtown unless you take the side streets. Concern about diversion and impacts to the bridges.
- As a non-profit, will NAYA pay tolls? Will our funders pay the tolls? Will we be able to sustain it? It wouldn't even be a choice for our staff and for other non-profits and the city itself.
- It would be a hassle to visit 15<sup>th</sup> and Alberta. Diversion is bad now - It's dangerous for my cousins to play, and then increased traffic will make the traffic safety worse.
- Anxious about this. I go downtown once a week to the courthouse. If I have to go there regularly and pay a toll each time, it's unrealistic. That's a main thing and the only way to get there is to use that section of I-5. That's horrible.
- Right now I do activist work. I go down there every other day at least. I couldn't afford to do that anymore.
- This is a federal highway and a known choke point. What part is the FHWA putting into this effort to alleviate the choke point?
- Are you talking to the big employers? These corporations with thousands of employees, do they talk about what it takes to get their employees to work and the impact on the system and their responsibility for it?
- Two problems: federal highway system and local highway system.
- Look at how those other cities do it and if the federal government can kick in.
- What happens to people who are on post-jail supervision and must report to a parole officer downtown? How does it affect their livelihood to be forced to pay a toll? They don't have a choice.

### ***Option C: Priced Roadway on the I-5 and I-205 Study Area***

- Everyone in the room said they drive some portion of the study area on a regular basis. They all felt impacted by Option C.
- At least the people in Lake Oswego would have to pay under this option.
- It won't happen because the rich areas won't let it. We get all the dirt.
- Was there a consideration of a priced lane instead of priced roadway through the whole system? Do the one tolled lane option through the entire system.



- The rich people use US26. The yuppies that drive out there are rude. Why is tolling only being considered where the poor people live?

***Option D: Priced Lane on I-205 from OR99E to Stafford Rd.***

- Six people indicated they regularly use this section of freeway.
- Would that be the only pricing point on the map?
- Let's do that one.
- How did they come up with these options? Why do these work best?
- The people who made the concepts, what is their income bracket?
- They are planners and engineers.

***Option E: Priced Roadway on I-205 over the Abernethy Bridge***

- Four participants said they regularly use this portion of freeway.
- That's silly.
- Where does the bridge take you?
- Doesn't make any sense to me. I don't understand the concept.
- It seems that if the bridge is tolled the revenue should be to the bridge maintenance.
- Looking at this area, I haven't been here long, but I have to depend on Google maps to get around. I would be lost trying to avoid that toll.
- There is an alternative to using that bridge by using 99E.

***How often do you travel on I-5 and/or I-205 in the Portland area?***

- I use both every day to avoid congestion.
- I don't get on I-205 after 3 pm.
- Congestion backs up the side roads for people trying to get to the bridge. It affects local travel too.
- Used to travel I-5 every day and changed my lifestyle to not use the freeway as much. I quit working in Portland. I had to live in Vancouver to take care of family. Had a choice of not getting on the highway every day. I'd have to leave earlier to avoid traffic rather than sit in traffic. I ended up being away from home 14-15 hours a day.
- I take I-5 south twice a week. Have to be there by 5:30 pm. If I leave at 4:30 I get on at Killingworth. There's a little traffic. 10 minutes later I take Prescott because it's faster to get to my destination using local streets when the freeway is actually more direct. I'd rather be on the freeway, but time won't allow. It's faster to take city streets than get on the highway.
- When asked, about half of this group takes local streets instead of the highway.
- Around 5:30 pm, coming north on I-205 I use 92nd and 82nd. It's slower, but less stressful. When the freeways are congested it's stressful. Harder for semis to go at slower speed.
- Use 82nd to avoid much of the freeway, but have to use it to get to Vancouver.
- Use MLK/Grand, 122nd, rather than freeways. Marine Drive. Columbia Blvd.
- After 1 or 2 pm, north of Glisan is a parking lot on I-205. Makes sense to use the surface streets. No expressways. 205 is a parking lot and there's no way around it.
- I-5 is worse.



***How does traffic congestion on these highways affect you personally and do you think it affects others in your community in the same way or differently?***

- The real impact is diversion. "Just walking on streets near my house now is deadly." Participants felt that their children couldn't be sent outside to play for fear of getting hit and killed by cars avoiding congestion.
- It's hard on my asthma. The second hour sitting in traffic, I can't do it anymore.

***How do you feel about the idea of paying a toll (fee) to use these highways?***

- I have lived in a lot of different states with toll roads where you don't use cash and bill you later. The congestion here is the same as other places that do have tolling. It didn't help. Texas, OK, KS, MO, and others.
- In SE Asia, Singapore has toll bridges and you can pay with transponders or at booths. In Malaysia, they had those as well. Singapore has been using this since 1993.
- Say I visit my mother from Vancouver. Would that be different than visiting someone who lives somewhere else? Would a long trip be tolled differently than a short trip?
- If you go through one corridor that tolled and then another, do you pay for one, or both? What if you use two tolled roads in one day?
- We'll be having Christmas dinner at 6 am to avoid tolls.
- I don't appreciate the toll prices and value pricing at all. We lowered the speed limits on city streets. It's going to cause problems. I won't be happy to get a bill in the mail if it's the only option for me. People in poverty will struggle. If you spend all you have to get to an event in the city and then they have a bill that they know nothing about, that will be really hard for people who live paycheck to paycheck. It's a way for the poor to be poorer. If you have to choose between kids' shoes and this, it will not be paid. It's inappropriate to charge unrecoverable money. It's a hardship for folks.
- It's offensive because of where poor people live too – further and further away. It's a huge issue, we have to recognize we have a problem and how to pay for things. We're one of only two states without a sales tax. If we're going to tax poor people who have no choice but take those roads, it's a problem.
- When the toll bill arrives and they don't pay, will it go to collections and the cops come?
- Does your license get suspended? That's a huge concern.
- We live in an economy that's so expensive. It's impossible to have a place without a roommate anymore. Vancouver is a little cheaper but then you are forced to drive into Oregon.
- You pay double taxes from working in Oregon. I have to cross the bridge and do it all the time. The traffic impacts my life. To work here and be taxed again, and tolled, I don't think it's sustainable and would have to re-evaluate how I live. People barely scrape by. More people live in poverty and it's growing. Those will be affected the most and will have to quit Oregon jobs.
- In Clark County we discussed this a lot. Like taxes, do you give a rebate or exception? Have you discussed what that looks like? I think the bulk of the cost should be on commercial enterprises. They are the most destructive and make the money. We keep them going by working for them. Nike and tech industry are



making big profits and getting tax subsidies (like Boeing). What kind of talk is happening about not making poor people taking the brunt of things as usual?

- I go see my grandson twice a week. If I had to pay a toll, I wouldn't go. I'd have to use Skype and the phone. I'm on a fixed income and have to be careful. It affects your life as a whole. It's about families too.
- TriMet uses a tiered system. Can something like that be implemented based on income. More should be put on commercial. Where will the money go and how will it be used and who gets access to it?
- Would it be spent in Portland, or statewide?
- Frustrating that we didn't get specific money for the Rose Quarter. It will be used to deal with roads and congestion. People statewide get cranky that Portland uses most of the money. The facilities elsewhere need to be repaired too. We want the roads to be repaired and usable statewide. We don't spend enough in the Portland metro.
- Tribal members have to come to Oregon for medical care. 60,000 people cross the river each day. We're part of Metro. Is this roadway going to Clark County too? They pay Oregon taxes, but don't have representation. This affects them daily. How can they have input?
- I live in North Portland. One of the only poor families as people have moved to Gresham. People come back to visit their community. I can't comprehend how they could do this to people. Williams and Vancouver are so congested I can't leave my house because it's so congested.
- The concept is to reduce congestion, where are the cars going? Are people just not traveling?
- The people with more money would still travel.
- You're comparing this to other cities. We're different because we have the river with only two paths across. So many people from Vancouver who work in Portland don't have a choice. It's not the same as cities with more choices.
- Why aren't the rich people who live on US Hwy. 26 asked to pay too?
- What demographics are you controlling for in the study? Are you looking at income and education and jobs that people have?
- A lot of people I know work multiple jobs to get by. Costs are increasing and wages are stagnant. Housing is farther away from jobs. The constant travel would add up to a lot of tolling.

***If tolling is implemented, is taking transit a viable mitigation strategy for you?***

- Depends on time of day. I don't ride at night; I don't feel safe.
- If there was rapid transit across the river I would use it.
- They keep cutting places I would go on transit. You have to drive because of the bus schedule.
- The bus stopped running to NAYA's office at 6:30 p.m. You have to walk a way down Columbia Blvd. if you want to catch the bus. It's not convenient or safe. It needs to be convenient for people to bother using it.
- I move too fast and have to use the roads. I can't use transit.
- If the tolls are charged, is it tax deductible?
- TriMet has us prove our income for lower cost transit passes. Can that be done here?



- They encourage us to use transit, but it's getting more dangerous with pedestrians hit and crossing dark streets at night. The MAX has a lot of dangers.
- A lot of youth of color are targeted on transit. That's an issue. Safety, security and racial profiling on public transportation.

***Are you concerned about diversion?***

- There was some concern about safety in neighborhoods bordering highly trafficked freeways. People felt that their kids weren't safe playing outside, and they didn't feel safe walking down the road due to the increase in vehicles diverting through neighborhood streets.
- Concern was also expressed about diversion from tolling contributing to current diversion happening due to freeway congestion.

***Is there anything else that you would like us to know?***

- I've been to a meeting where they said we want input, and then I find that they wanted it after the fact and things were already decided. How do I know that's not what's happening here?
- We want to make sure it's not just lip service and our input is taken into account.

## APPENDIX C: RESULTS FROM TITLE VI/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SURVEY

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ODOT conducted an outreach survey specifically for Title VI/Environmental Justice communities to supplement the findings from the discussion groups. The community engagement liaisons assisted in distributing paper copies of the survey and the online link.

The questions asked of participants in the Title VI/Environmental Justice engagement survey were similar to those asked of the community in the Winter 2017-2018 online survey. This provides useful comparisons between feedback about value pricing from the general public and underrepresented populations. The 13 questions can be grouped around three distinct categories:

- Travel patterns and behaviors
- Value pricing expectations and considerations
- Participant demographics

### C.1 Survey questions

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The following questions were included in the online surveys and on paper copies. Questions 1-7 featured choices for answers, question 8 was open-ended, and questions 9-13 asked for demographic information.

1. How often do you travel on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland area?
2. Where are you usually going when you travel on I-5 and I-205?
3. When you travel on I-5 or I-205, are you mostly driving alone, with others, on transit, or through a ride sharing service?
4. How does traffic on I-5 and I-205 affect you personally?
5. If there were tolls on I-5 and I-205 that resulted in a faster, more reliable trip for you, how might that change your behavior?
6. What might affect your decision the most about driving on I-5 or I-205 if there are tolls?
7. Consider your level of agreement with the following statements. Choose your top five. [forced choice ranking of Travel Options, Cost and Other Concerns – 12 options]
8. Do you have additional thoughts you would like to share with the Portland Metro Area Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis project team?
9. What is your ZIP code?
10. What is your annual household income?
11. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?
12. How do you identify yourself culturally?
13. What year were you born?



*Chinese community members complete the value pricing survey. Source: Timmy Tso*





## C.2 Survey results (closed-ended questions)

The questions asked of participants in the Title VI/Environmental Justice Engagement Survey were almost identical to those asked of the community in the Winter 2017-2018 online survey. In the following paragraphs, results of the seven closed-ended questions are presented in summary form around two distinct categories:

- Travel patterns and behaviors
- Value pricing expectations and considerations

Following the topline results from each category, subgroup analysis is noted at the end of each section. Relevant comparisons between the Winter 2017-2018 results and the Title VI/Environmental Justice results are integrated throughout this chapter.

### C.2.1 Travel patterns and behaviors

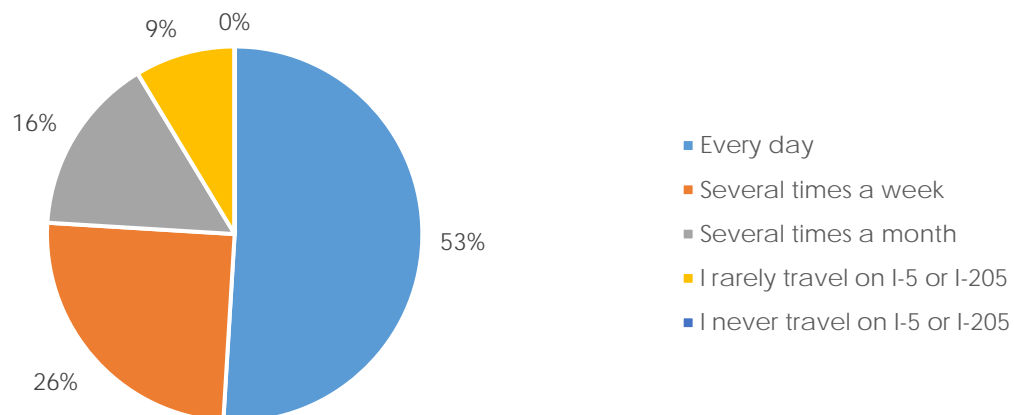
Four questions are included in this category. Three of the four questions were asked of the larger community in the Winter 2017-2018 online survey with identical wording. One question was unique to the Title VI/Environmental Justice Engagement Survey version and will be presented independently.

In the first question designed to assess travel patterns and behaviors of the participant group, the most significant finding is that over half of all survey takers travel on I-5 and I-205, anywhere between the Oregon and Washington border every day (53 percent).

Compared to the broader community results from the Winter 2017-2018 online survey, this group shows a much more frequent daily use of I-5 and I-205 (30 percent were daily users from the Winter 2017-2018 survey).

A very small percentage, less than 10 percent, said they rarely or never travel on I-5 or I-205. The open-ended comments provided suggest these drivers use other freeways rather than I-5 or I-205.

***Q1: How frequently do you travel on I-5 and I-205, anywhere between the Oregon-Washington border and where I-5 and I-205 meet near Tualatin?***





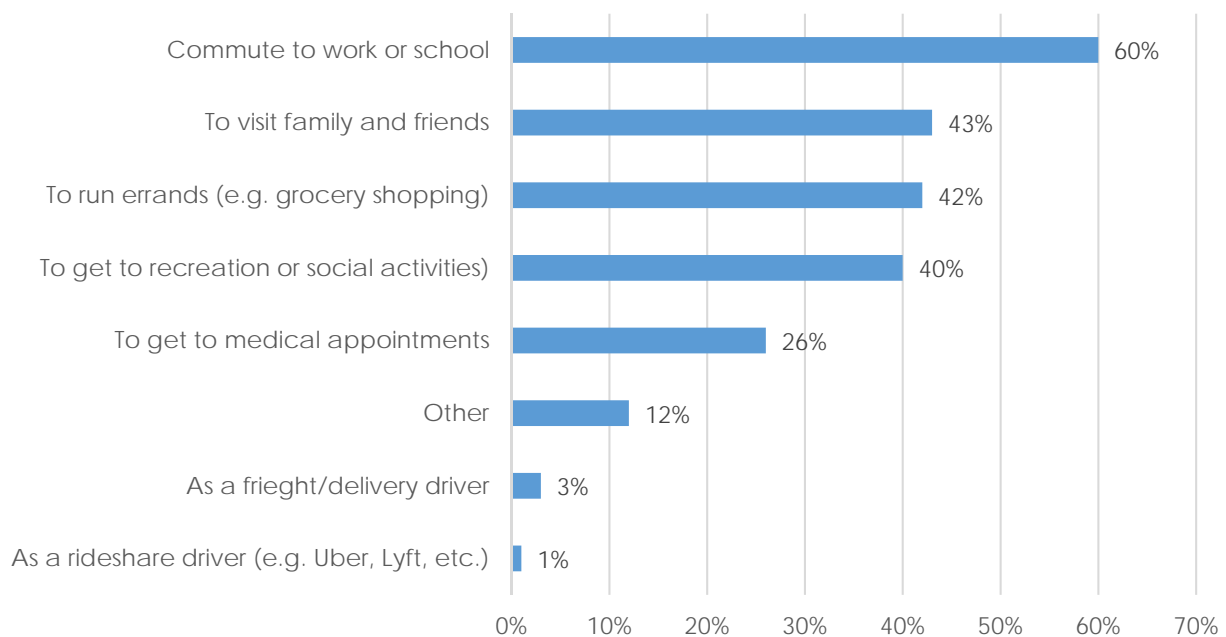
Next, in the second question of the series, all respondents to the survey were asked about the purpose of their trips on I-5 and I-205. There were eight closed-ended choices offered and respondents could select multiple answer choices. Included in the set of eight options was an “other” trip purpose that could also be checked but more specific answers were not collected.

Sixty percent of all respondents to this question indicated they travel on I-5 or I-205 to commute to work or school. This response aligns well with the results from the prior question showing a high percentage of drivers using the freeways daily. The result is important because it differs from the results from the Winter 2017-2018 survey where 51 percent of drivers indicated a similar trip purpose.

Between 40 and 43 percent of all respondents reported non-work or non-school related trips on I-5 and I-205, which included errands, driving to recreational and social activities, and travel to visit friends and family.

Just over one-quarter of respondents (26 percent) travel the corridors to and from medical appointments.

**Q2: Where are you usually going when you travel on I-5 and I-205? Check all that apply.**



A higher percentage of commuters and students could indicate less flexibility in travel times or travel patterns assuming workers and students have set times and days when they need a predictable arrival time. Value pricing will uniquely and directly affect this population. More questions later in the survey will provide a good understanding of the group’s flexibility to consider alternatives.

Compared to the Winter 2017-2018 survey, the Title VI/Environmental Justice survey respondents were less likely to travel on I-5 and I-205 for recreational trips. Other appointments, visits with family or friends and errands were reported at near the same frequency as the public. Drivers with Lyft, Uber or other delivery companies comprise less



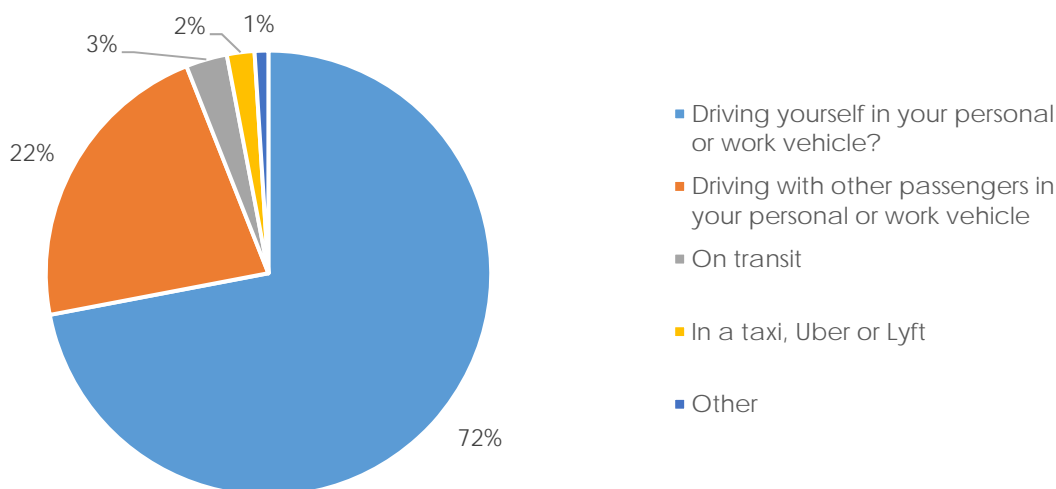
than 5 percent of the Title VI/Environmental Justice survey audience, which is comparable to the public results.

The third question in this category asked respondents to share if they typically drive alone, drive with other passengers or in any other arrangement on their regular trips on I-5 and I-205.

Over 70 percent of respondents indicated that they typically drive alone along the corridor, which is within same range of response to the Winter 2017-2018 survey data in which 66 percent of drivers reported solo occupancy.

The next largest subgroup (22 percent) drive with other passengers in their vehicle. Overall, less than 5 percent of all respondents travel on I-5 or I-205 using alternative modes such as cycling, biking, walking or in a rideshare.

**Q3: When you travel on I-5 or I-205, are you mostly: \_\_\_\_? Check one answer.**



The last question of this series focused on trip behavior and patterns asked participants to select all the ways in which congestion on I-5 and I-205 impacts them personally. Six choices were offered, along with an “other” (marked by less than 10 percent of respondents). This question was not asked in the survey to the public in the Winter 2017-2018.

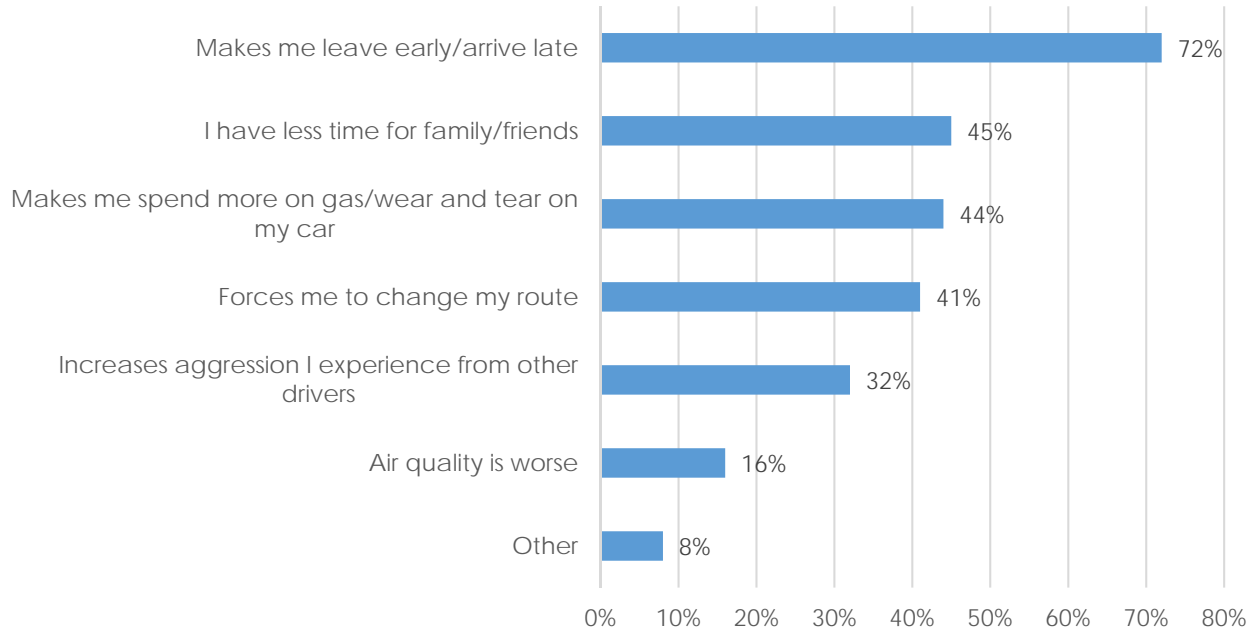
Three of the choices offered were selected by at least half of all respondents, with the top impact as “Makes me leave early/arrive late” (72 percent). This is an impact with significant consequences for those who commute every day to work and school, as opposed to those who are late for other types of appointments.

Next, 45 percent said congestion means they have less time for family and friends. A similar percent (44 percent) indicated that congestion brings about more wear and tear on their cars and higher gas bills. Rounding out the top four answers was a response from 40 percent of survey takers that congestion forces drivers to re-route to streets that are less congested.



Less than a third of drivers indicated that they were personally affected by air quality (16 percent) or aggression from other drivers (31 percent).

**Q4: How does traffic congestion on I-5 and I-205 affect you personally? Check all that apply.**



### Differences among demographic groups

**Geography:**

- Daily travel on I-5 and I-205 is highest for residents living in Clark and Clackamas counties (between 63 percent and 65 percent, respectively). In comparison, just over half of residents from Multnomah County (51 percent) travel the freeways daily. In Washington County, use of the I-5 and I-205 freeways is the least frequent with roughly a third traveling daily, a third making weekly trips and another third only driving a few times a month.
- Over 60 percent of the trips by residents living in Clark, Clackamas and Multnomah counties are for work or school. In contrast, 47 percent of trips made by Washington county residents are work or school-related. Multnomah county also has a high percentage of residents who travel on I-205 and I-5 for medical appointments and social visits.
- Over 70 percent of residents in each county agreed that congestion makes drivers leave early or arrive late for appointments or meetings. This was perceived to be the most serious impact across the region. Changing routes was an impact felt most strongly by drivers from Washington and Multnomah counties (53 and 52 percent, respectively) but described much less often by drivers in Clackamas (28 percent) and Clark (5 percent) counties. Wear and tear on cars was felt most strongly by drivers who travel on I-205 and I-5 the most frequently—those living in Clark and Multnomah counties.



### *Income:*

Of the 313 surveys completed or partially completed, 272 individuals answered the demographic question about household income at the end of the survey. Among this group, 192 indicated their household income was under \$45,000 per year. The rest, 79, had incomes above \$45,000. This distribution, with more than two times the respondents in the lowest two income groups as the highest two income groups, provides some important context in reviewing the correlations to follow regarding income.

- Question 1 by income subgroup shows that households earning less than \$25,000 a year are the least likely income group to use I-205 and I-5 daily. Daily use of the freeways increases with income, with up daily travel common for 50 percent of households earning \$25,000 to \$45,000. Above the \$45,000 marker, daily use of I-5 and I-205 increases considerably, with 65 percent of all households reporting daily use when household income is over \$45,000.
- Question 2 by income subgroup reveals two important findings. First, almost two-thirds of residents with incomes above \$25,000 use the I-205 and I-5 corridors for trips to work or school. However, for those earning less than \$25,000, only 36 percent are driving for work or school. Instead, this group is more likely to be driving for errands (55 percent) or social appointments (44 percent) both of which may be less likely to occur during weekday rush hours. A second finding is that households earning at least \$25,000 may be making more trips in an average week or month as measured by the number of trip purposes each individual checked off in their answer. More specifically, errands and social appointments were mentioned by at least 40 percent of individuals in the lowest income group earning less than \$25,000 but four unique answers (work/school, errands, social appointments and visits to family) were mentioned by at least 40 percent of individuals in the highest income group earning more than \$75,000. This finding suggests that higher income drivers may be logging more car trips on average and would have a higher likelihood of opting in to a priced lane or needing to consider an alternative.
- The responses to Question 3, analyzed by income, indicate that lower income households are slightly more likely to be using transit and carpooling and less likely to be driving solo, but only by a few percentage points. Among households earning less than \$25,000, 66 percent drive alone. The drive alone percentage climbs with income, topping out at 80 percent for those earning above \$45,000. It is accurate and fair to conclude from this question that the clear majority of all drivers, regardless of income, continue to drive alone for most of their trips.
- Finally, Question 4 shows strong correlation between income with higher income residents indicating higher degrees of perceived impact compared with low income drivers. For instance, 65 percent of drivers from households with the highest income report being forced to change their routes due to congestion, but 33 percent of drivers with the lowest income report this as an impact. Question 4 also shows that even when controlling for income, leaving early or being late and having less time for family and friends are the top two or in top three impacts for all drivers.



## *Language*

This survey was provided online and on paper in five languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian and Chinese. Significant relationships between language and travel patterns and behavior are summarized below.

- At least half of English speakers, Vietnamese, Russian and Chinese speakers use I-5 and I-205 daily, with the majority of the trips taken for work or school.
- Spanish-speakers are also making most of their trips for work or school. However, Spanish speakers indicated less frequent use of I-5 and I-205 (39 percent travel on the freeways daily, 31 percent use them a few times a week). It is almost impossible to know why this is; more Spanish-speakers in the area may live further away from I-5 and I-205 routes, for example.
- Over half of all subgroups indicated they are driving alone on most of their trips. Among Vietnamese and Chinese respondents, over 90 percent said they mostly drive alone. Carpooling was much more common among Spanish-speakers (21 percent), Russian-speakers (41 percent), and English-speakers (24 percent).
- Being late or arriving late to appointments because of congestion impacts was one of the top two impacts mentioned by all respondents, regardless of language spoken. Being late was mentioned by over half of all respondents; the only impact tested that was experienced so deeply and by all groups.

## *Purpose of Trip*

Survey takers provided several descriptions of the reasons they travel on I-205 and I-5, including work/school, driving for a rideshare, taxi or freight company; recreation, social or family visits; and medical appointments. To analyze trends by trip type, some similar groupings have been combined. For example, "Work/school trips" and "Driving for Uber, Lyft, taxi or freight" are similar enough to be examined as one category.

- The largest percentage of daily highway trips (73 percent) are by those commuting to work or school. Next, 57 percent of those using I-205 and I-5 for medical appointments are traveling daily. Finally, 42 percent of trips under the family/friends, social and errands category are occurring daily. One important finding from this distribution is that while medical appointments may not be a high volume of trips total, those traveling for this purpose have higher frequency than might be expected.
- Commuters and students are the most likely to be driving solo (78 percent). In comparison, those needing to use I-205 and I-5 for medical trips are less likely to be driving themselves (62 percent) and slightly more likely to be carpooling with others (32 percent). Transit, walking or cycling does not pop as an alternative for any group for any purpose; it occurs because of high accessibility and convenience rather than someone's trip type. Among those currently using I-205 or I-5 for errands, recreation, or to visit family, a full 67 percent are driving alone and 26 percent are traveling with passengers. In context of congestion pricing, less than one in five drivers who travel for work or school would likely benefit by a carpool discount since almost 80 percent indicate they drive alone. A carpool waiver or discount may provide some relief to drivers getting to medical appointments, but again, this is not the majority of all trips being made today.





- Controlling for trip purpose reinforces that the #1 congestion impact across all trip types is that drivers are needing to leave early for their appointments or risk arriving late. Over 70 percent of drivers in all three trip type subgroups agreed with this, with the impact being most acute for those getting to medical appointments (83 percent indicated leaving early/being late was an impact). The impacts in the #2 and #3 spots shifted a bit depending on trip type but included having less time for friends/family and spending more money on gas and car maintenance (again, with drivers going to medical appointments as the most impacted subgroup). All three of these impacts are a distinct top tier for drivers across all trip types.

### *Age*

Three age groups were created after survey participants provided their birth year in the demographic section of survey questions. The age groups include: Over 50 years old (N=73), 35 to 49 years old (N=123) and Under 35 years old (N=61).

- There were no differences in frequency of travel by age.
- There were no differences in trip type by age.
- Older drivers are slightly more likely to be driving alone for most of their trips (89 percent), compared to the drive alone tendencies of younger drivers (76 percent for 35-49 year olds and 79 percent among under 35 year olds).
- Among respondents under 35, almost 10 percent indicated the use I-205 and I-5 as a transit rider or rideshare passenger, compared to less than 3 percent from the 35 to 49 age group or over 50 age group.

## **C.2.2 Value pricing expectations and considerations**

The first two questions in this category help build an understanding of the group's driving behavior in a value pricing environment and what factors impact that driving behavior. Important key findings emerged from asking these two questions:

- Almost 40 percent of respondents overall are unsure how their driving behavior would change if there were user fees on I-5 and I-205, with 22 percent indicating that set employment hours are an issue. Compared to the Winter 2017-2018 survey results, this audience is more unsure about how user fees would disrupt their trip planning
- Almost two-thirds of all respondents say price of the user fee would be the top influencing factor in driving on I-5 and I-205 if congestion pricing were implemented (64 percent). This is not only the top factor above all other factors mentioned, but it is seven percentage points higher than what was recorded in the Winter 2017-2018 survey of the general public.

In Question 5, while over 39 percent said they weren't sure what they would do, it is notable that 37 percent said they would avoid the user fees by driving a different route that isn't tolled. This 37 percent is almost identical to the 39 percent of the general public who said they would try to avoid a priced lane.

Approximately 22 percent say they would pay the toll and expect a faster trip. In comparison with the results from the general public (36 percent said they would pay), these

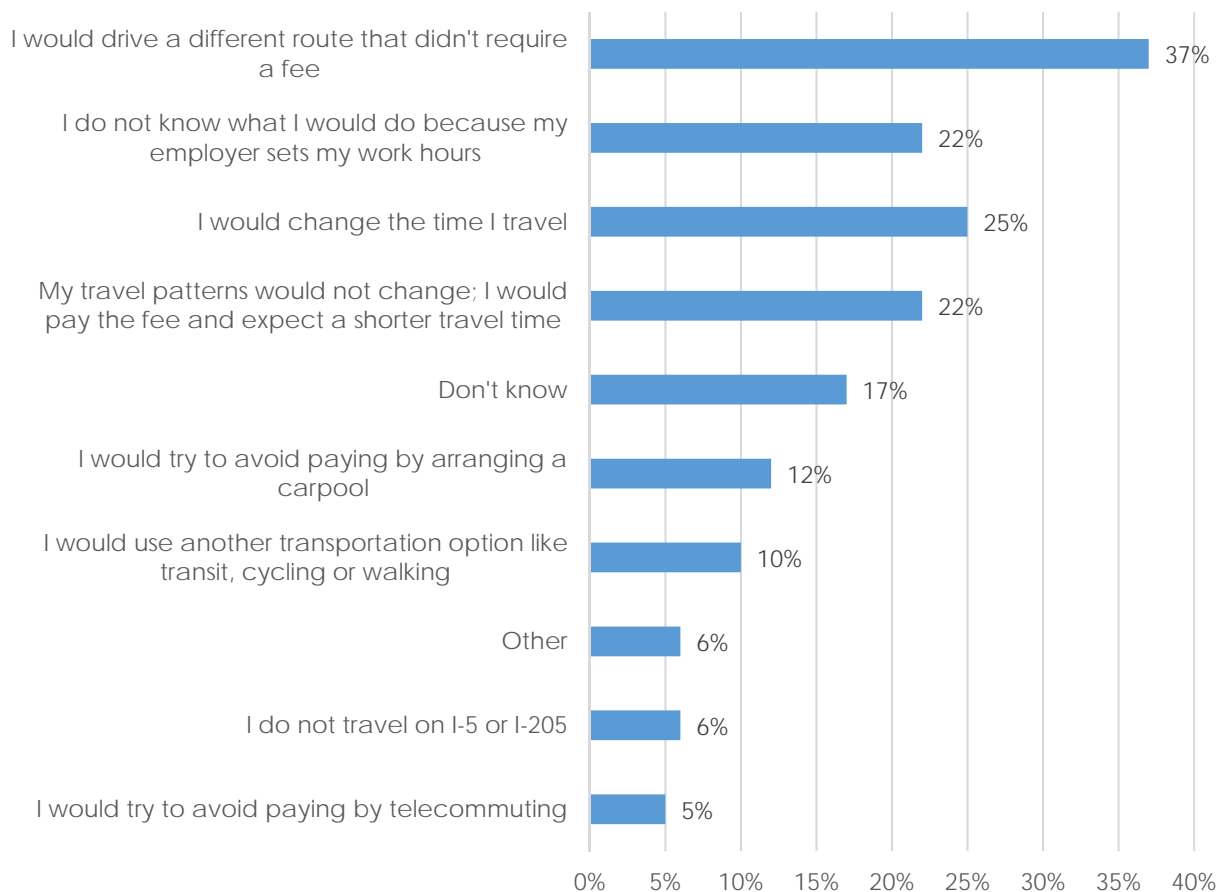


survey results indicate a much lower willingness or ability to pay the fee to drive in a priced lane.

Finally, all of the alternatives to paying the toll such as transit, cycling, or walking (-5 points less); carpooling (-3 points less); and telecommuting (-4 points) were less likely to be mentioned as viable choices for the participants to this survey when compared to the responses from the general public in the Winter 2017-2018 survey.

The results from this question in the Winter 2017-2018 survey showed a baseline level of avoidance at roughly 40 percent and an almost equal level of willingness to pay and expect a shorter trip. A very small percentage of the public were unsure what they would do. In contrast, surveying lower income residents and non-English speakers reveals similar avoidance levels, but more than three times the uncertainty about how they would respond and a lower chance (-14 points) that drivers would pay to drive in a priced lane.

**Q5. If there were tolls on I-5 and I-205 that resulted in a faster and more reliable trip for you, how might that change your behavior? Check all that apply.**

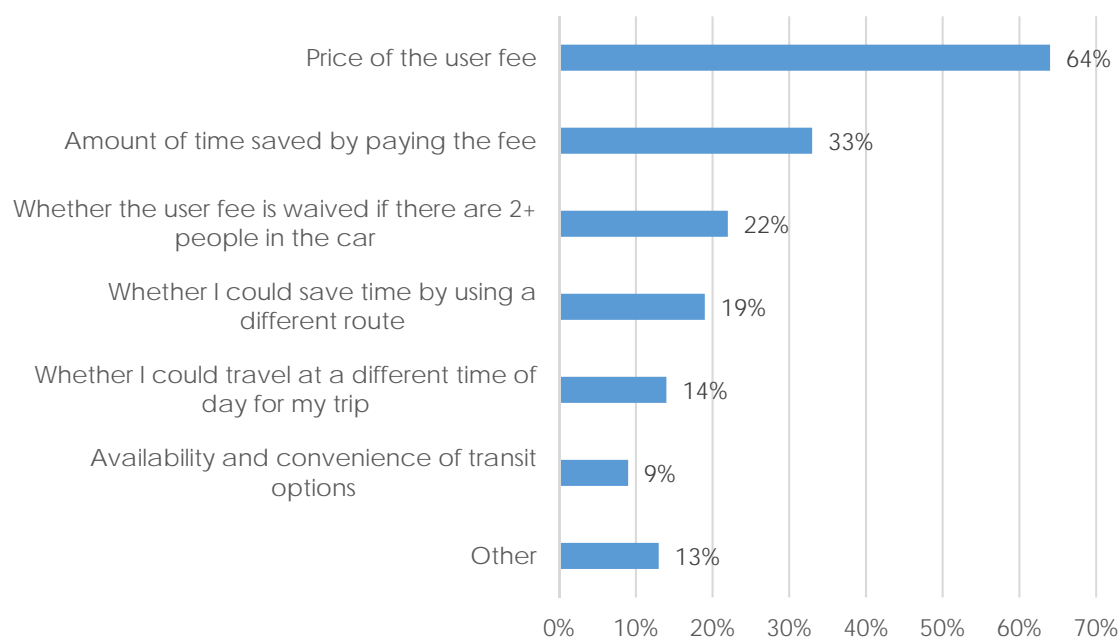


In the next question, participants were asked about the factors that would influence their choice in paying to drive in a priced lane or trying to avoid it. One of the most notable findings from this round of surveys is that 64 percent of all participants are heavily influenced



by the price of the proposed user fee or toll. While this was the number one factor with the public in the Winter 2017-2018 survey, there were two other factors within a 20-point range that were shown to be strong influencers of driving decisions. In contrast, in reviewing the Title VI/Environmental Justice survey results, not only is “price” a much stronger factor in driving behavior, but there is a gap of more than 31 percentage points between “price” as the top factor and then next highest factor (“time saved” at 33 percent). The public was also impacted by time saved, but the gap between time saved and price was only nine percentage points.

**Q6. What might affect your decision the most about driving on I-5 or I-205 if there are tolls? Check all that apply.**



In addition to the key findings noted above the chart, 33 percent say they would be influenced by the amount of time saved by paying the fee and 22 percent would be influenced by carpool waivers if they were available to cars with at least two passengers. Compared to the influencing factors shared by the general public, two specific comparisons stand out:

- The respondents to the Title VI/Environmental Justice survey were less likely to be influenced by the availability or convenience of transit options (9 percent compared to 27 percent); and
- The respondents to the Title VI/Environmental Justice survey were less likely to have flexibility to consider traveling at a different time of day for their trips (14 percent compared to 36 percent)

Both of these findings suggest this audience is challenged by limited access to transit where they live and limited flexibility in the time of day they travel.

In the last closed-ended survey question, participants were asked to read 11 separate statements that may impact an individual’s choice to drive in a priced lane or find another



alternative. Each participant was asked to select five statements from the list of 11 and then rank the five from one to five, with one indicating the strongest level of agreement. The Winter 2017-2018 did not include this question, so comparisons are not available.

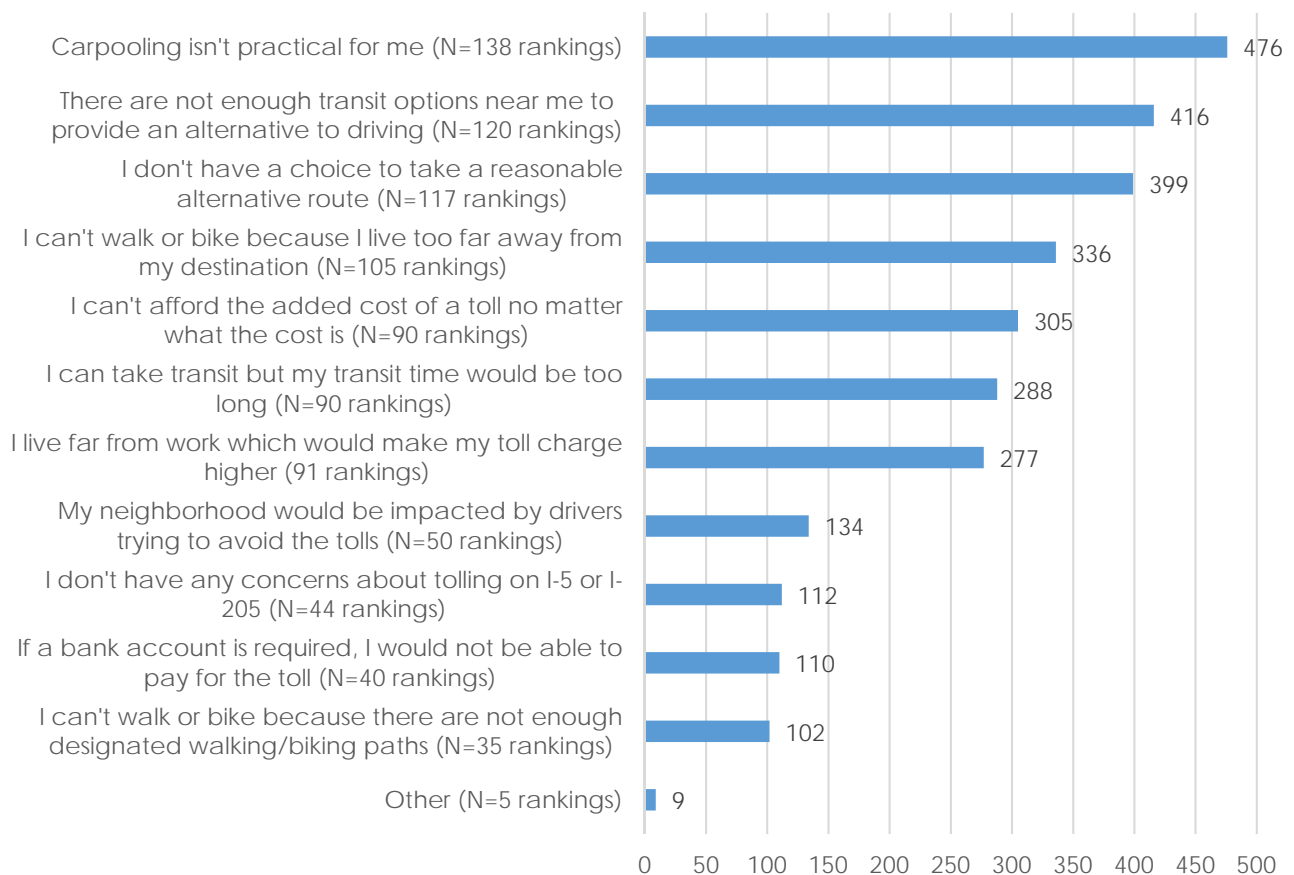
The five statements (in order of highest level of agreement) that received the most number of rankings included:

- Carpooling isn't practical for me
- There are not enough transit options near me to provide an alternative to driving
- I don't have a choice to take a reasonable alternative route
- I can't walk or bike because I live too far away from my destination
- I can't afford the added cost of a toll no matter what the cost is

The cluster of five highly-ranked statements confirm two points: first, this audience would like more choices to use alternative transportation modes that take cars off the road; and second, tolls are perceived to be unaffordable no matter what the cost. Neighborhood cut-throughs, lack of access to bank credit or the availability of walking/bike paths do not appear to impact participants in a strong way.

The bar chart below shows the rank score for each statement (a high score is a blended representation of a high number of rankings and stronger agreement) and how many participants selected each statement.

**Q. 7. Consider your level of agreement with the statements below. Rank your top five statements by numbering them 1 through 5, with 1 being the statement you agree the most.**





## Differences among demographic groups

### *Geography:*

Approximately 20 percent of drivers in each county say they plan to pay a congestion pricing fee and will expect a shorter trip. There was very little variation by county. Among those who do not want to drive in a priced lane, there were some differences by region:

- Approximately 40 percent of drivers in Multnomah, Clark and Washington counties report they plan to drive different routes to avoid priced lanes. Avoidance tendencies seem a little lower in Clark county where uncertainty is the dominant reaction (over 50 percent unsure or indicated that their employers set their hours).
- Telecommuting was the most frequently mentioned by residents of Clackamas county (17 percent) and was almost double the rate in any other region.
- About a third of residents in Multnomah and Washington counties thought they could change their time of travel (29 percent and 31 percent, respectively).
- Interest in transit alternatives were consistently low—between five and 15 percent—in each region.
- The price of the user fee was the #1 factor for residents of Clark, Multnomah, and Washington counties in their decision to drive in a priced lane. For drivers from Clackamas county, whether or not there would be a carpool waiver and how much time would be saved were more or equally important to the price of the toll.

### *Income:*

Income is a strong predictor of attitudes on value pricing and congestion impacts.

- In general, higher income residents earning over \$75,000 a year are much more likely to pay to drive in a priced lane (53 percent) and less likely to re-route or adjust their travel pattern to avoid the fee (32 percent say they would drive a different route). Among individuals earning less than \$25,000 a year, 7 percent say they would pay the toll and almost half (47 percent) would try to drive a different route. Willingness to pay the toll increases 20 percentage points (to 38 percent willing) among households earning at least \$45,000 a year. This is a clear tipping point when paying the toll eclipses avoidance (31 percent).
- The price of the user fee was the most significant influencer for those earning \$25,000 or less and between \$25,000 and \$45,000 (68 percent and 70 percent, respective) but falls to between 46 percent and 56 percent among higher income cohorts. Higher income participants earning \$45,000 for their household begin to factor in time savings, alongside the price of the fee whereas lower income participants don't come close to saving enough time to make the fee affordable.
- All income groups agreed that carpooling wasn't a practical option for them. Lack of transit options and other "reasonable alternative" routes were also areas of agreement across income categories. When asked if participants agreed with the statement "I can't afford the added cost of a toll no matter what the cost", the participants in the lowest income group said this was very compelling (ranked #2 of all 11 statement) but it was not ranked in the top five among high income earning participants and ranked fourth and fifth for those earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000.



### *Language:*

Participants from the survey completed questions in five different languages and represent multiple cultures and a cross-section of other demographic subgroups. Analysis of the results by language spoken reveal some common experiences and attitudes about congestion pricing. Among them:

- Roughly a third of all participants indicate they will try and drive other routes to avoid paying a congestion pricing fee.
- Between 15-20 percent of Spanish, Russian, Chinese and English speakers say they will likely pay the fee with a higher percentage of Vietnamese drivers willing to pay to save time. Indeed, the time savings factor was highest among Vietnamese drivers (39 percent) compared to responses from all other language groups.
- The price of the user fee was the overall #1 factor in determining whether someone would consider driving in a priced lane, ranging from 51 percent among Chinese speakers to upwards of 80 percent among Spanish speakers. It is relevant that the Spanish-speaking cohort reported the lowest average income across language groups.
- Spanish speakers reported the highest degree of uncertainty when asked what they would do in response to congestion pricing, with 40 percent saying they were unsure or that their employer set their hours thereby limiting their choices to travel at different times or the day or carpool.

### *Purpose of Trip:*

Trip type illustrates some important relationships between opinions on value pricing and the trips participants are making on I-205 and I-5.

- Survey participants driving to and from medical appointments appear to have some flexibility in when they travel (31 percent would consider changing the time they are on the road, compared to 22 percent of students and workers). This group also indicates they would be more likely to try and avoid paying a congestion pricing fee if possible (58 percent) but their answer does not provide more explanation.
- In Question 6, all three groups show price sensitivity with “the price of the user fee” being the number one influential factor in deciding whether to opt into a priced lane or consider alternatives. Price was mentioned by 66 percent of students/workers, by 71 percent of those running errands/visiting family/or traveling for social appointments and by 81 percent of those traveling to/from doctor appointments. It is likely those making frequent medical trips are older and may be experiencing higher health costs. These factors elevate affordability as a significant concern.
- The inconvenience of carpooling was a consensus item for all participants, regardless of the type of trip they are making. Lack of transit access and alternative routes were also common areas of agreement for drivers making all types of trips.
- The statement “I can’t afford the added cost of a toll no matter what the cost” was ranked #2 among those traveling for doctor appointments, but less of a factor for workers/students and those making social trips, running errands, or visiting family.





**Age:**

Cost to drive in a priced lane and perceptions of affordability are important to all age groups but were more critical factors for youth and young adults under 35.

- Those under 35 are more willing to try carpooling and transit than older drivers. As a group, they appear to have the least willingness to alter the time they travel on I-205 or I-5.
- Over 40 percent of younger drivers under 35 and older drivers over 50 said they would drive other roads to avoid the tolls. Among 35-49 year olds who are the greatest share of daily commuters, avoidance is less likely (29 percent).
- “The cost of the user fee” was the number one factor in determining whether to drive in a priced lane. This was a factor mentioned by all age groups, but declined slightly with age (49 percent mentioning cost among 50+ year olds, 62 percent among 35-49 year olds and 80 percent among residents under 35). Older drivers appear to be more persuaded by the option to drive a different route (mentioned by 27 percent of those over 50) compared to younger drivers who are more motivated by time savings (33 percent) and the chance to carpool (28 percent).

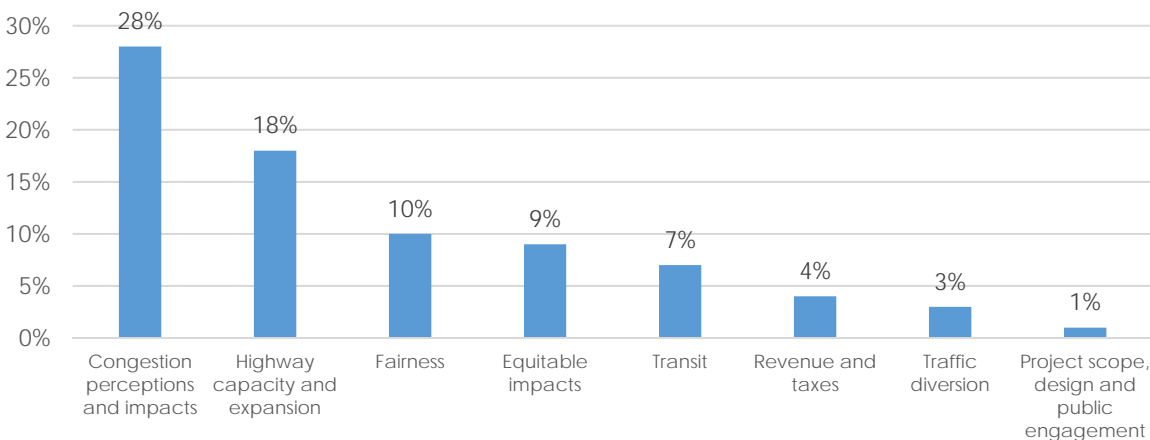
**C.3 Survey results (open-ended question)**

This section summarizes the key topics and themes mentioned in open-ended responses to Question 8 on the outreach survey, which asked, “do you have any additional thoughts you would like to share with the Portland Area Value Pricing Project Team?”. Around a third of all survey respondents submitted an answer to this question (96 responses in total).

**C.3.1 Key topics and themes**

Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of the most frequently mentioned topics in open-ended responses. Some comments discussed multiple topics, and several themes overlap across multiple coding categories. Within each topic and theme, several sub-topics were also identified. The following sections discuss key messages, questions and concerns related to these topics. Each section includes selected quotes from comments that generally represent the range of responses received.

**Figure 0-1. Thematic topics most frequently mentioned in question 8 responses**





The themes discussed in the responses to Question 8 by EJ and Title VI communities were very similar to those mentioned in open-ended comments submitted to the project during the winter outreach period. However, respondents to the EJ/Title VI community survey were less likely to discuss revenue and taxes than those who commented during the winter outreach period (16 percent of comments received during the winter period discussed revenue/taxes, compared to 4 percent of respondents to this survey).

## Congestion perceptions and impacts

Approximately 28 percent of all comments discussed congestion. These comments discussed existing traffic conditions or expectations for the future.

### *Perceptions of congestion*

- Many commenters felt that current congestion is partly the result of insufficient road capacity. Several felt that a residual effect of inadequate road capacity is diversion onto surface streets, which has significantly damaged the roadways. Some mentioned that this has, in turn, pushed more people onto the freeway who may otherwise use surface streets.
- Some noted congestion occurs on other roadways beyond I-5 and I-205. A few questioned why value pricing is not being considered on I-84.
- Some said that congestion in the Portland Metro Area makes living here undesirable.

### *Expectation for congestion in the future*

- Many commenters expect congestion to increase with the growing population, noting that something needs to be done to address it.
- Some feel that value pricing will not help alleviate congestion, and some others feel value pricing will make congestion worse. Some, however, disagreed and said they were hopeful value pricing will reduce congestion.

## Highway capacity and expansion

Approximately 18 percent of comments related to the capacity of existing roadways. These comments often addressed expanding capacity by adding lanes or by constructing additional, alternative routes to I-5 and I-205.

### *Existing infrastructure*

- Many comments said existing roadways cannot accommodate traffic today.
- Many identified locations where new capacity is needed. The most frequently mentioned areas included:
  - The I-5 bridge across the Columbia River
  - I-5 near the Rose Quarter
  - I-205 northbound between Exit 12 and the airport.
- Several called for the development of new capacity on existing roadways, such as:
  - Adding lanes to both I-5 and I-205

#### **Quotes from comments about highway capacity and expansion:**

*"Build a bridge – Camas – Gresham, which has been promised for years."*

*"Add more lanes!"*

*"Build more bridges or expand the freeways."*



- Creating “double decker” bridges to accommodate more cars
- Removing the HOV lane on I-5 to add capacity

### *Construction of alternative routes*

- Many comments said new alternative routes are needed to alleviate congestion on main arterials in the metro area. The most common suggestion was to construct an additional bridge over the Columbia on the east side (Camas/Washougal to Troutdale/Gresham).

### Fairness

Around 10 percent of comments mentioned fairness. Comments about fairness discussed the ethics of a user fee system, who “should” and “should not” have to pay, and whether travelers have a choice in travel route due to their personal schedules, needs or the availability of other options. The concepts of “fairness” and “equity” are related, but distinct. Comments about “equity” focus on whether historically disenfranchised populations will experience disproportionate **outcomes** and **impacts** as a result of value pricing.

- Many respondents from Southwest Washington said that the tolls will have an unfair impact on them, while some Oregon respondents said it is fair to toll out of state commuters more than Oregonians (though reasoning was not provided).
- Many commenters feel that value pricing is not fair to those who must travel between Oregon and Washington because there are no other routes available.
- Many commenters discussed tolling only during peak hours being more fair than a constant toll that increased and decreased around the clock based on traffic. However, a few said that tolling during peak hours is unfair because many cannot change their commuting hours.
- Some commenters expressed that freeways should be free.
- A few linked fairness to how and where potential revenue would be spent. Some of these commenters said they did not trust that money collected would benefit their communities or neighborhoods based on historical allocation of tax revenues.
- Some felt that a user fee system, particularly one that tolls an entire roadway, removes the user’s choice and freedoms to access public goods.
- A few respondents noted that carpooling is not feasible for them.

#### Quotes from comments about fairness:

*“Toll fee in rush hour only.”*

*“Make Vancouver pay for toll only.”*

*“There are no other options except for 205 and 5 as to how to move from Vancouver to Portland and vice versa. So the traffic will persist, but it will be a “paid” traffic.”*



## Equitable impacts

Approximately 9 percent of comments discussed equity impacts. Most of these responses focused on income-based equity, though others referred to impacts to different racial and ethnic groups.

### *Income*

- Many comments discussed the impact value pricing could have on low income drivers, particularly in terms of an additional cost burden. A few mentioned increases in housing and gas prices and expressed worry that tolls could make travel unaffordable.
- Many comments also suggested value pricing could disproportionately benefit higher-income individuals because wealthier drivers would be more likely to be able to pay the fee.
- Many comments suggested lower income commuters may not be able to travel at a different time to pay a lower fee due to their work schedules.
- Several comments noted low income residents often have to live further out and have to travel farther because of rising housing costs. Many neighborhoods are not always well served by transit, which means more residents must drive to commute to work.

### **Quotes from comments about equity:**

*"This would ultimately disenfranchise communities of color, low income individuals, and people struggling to make ends meet. Those with the means to pay a toll will do so, however, it will disproportionately impact those who will not be able to afford the cost of a toll."*

*"Fee [should be] waived for low income families who have to drive I-5 or I-205 every day."*

### *Race/ethnicity*

- Some comments discussed potential disproportionate impacts on communities of color, often in conjunction with concerns around income equity. Some said these impacts may be greater because persons of color may be more likely to live near the proposed concepts or where transit access is limited.

### *Mitigation*

- Many comments that discussed equity concerns asked about or suggested possible mitigation strategies, including:
  - Discounts or incentives for drivers with lower incomes
  - Passes or exemptions for those traveling from Washington for work
  - Using revenue to increase multi-modal options in current underserved neighborhoods
  - Options or opportunities to reduce impacts on those with less flexible schedules



## Transit

Approximately 7 percent of comments discussed transit.

### *Availability and convenience of transit*

- Many comments discussed the extent of the transit network. Many said transit options are not available or do not extend to where they live.
- Many discussed the increased time transit travel can take compared to driving. Some of these comments suggest more express options are needed (e.g. express lanes, express bus routes, express MAX trains, etc.)
- A few expressed interests in a public-private partnership for more employers to subsidize public transit.

### *Revenue expenditure on public transit*

- Some commenters expressed an interest in value pricing tolls being used to subsidize low-income transit fare.
- Some commenters, however, said they did not want revenue to be allocated to transit, suggesting funds should go exclusively toward highway expansion.

#### Quotes from comments about transit:

*"Maybe if TriMet could actually get people where and when they need to be somewhere it would help."*

*"High speed train better."*

*"This probably will not alleviate congestion unless public transit is greatly increased and affordable with diverse routes that don't require hubs."*

## Revenue and taxes

Approximately 4 percent of comments discussed taxes and/or revenue. This included comments about how existing tax revenue and transportation dollars are spent, as well as comments about expenditure of potential new revenue collected through value pricing.

### *Expenditure of existing tax revenue*

- Many said tax revenue has not been effectively managed to address congestion and road capacity, and several suggested a lack of trust in government oversight of revenue.
- Some commenters from Southwest Washington said they already pay Oregon state income tax. There is confusion as to what income tax funds.
- Some commenters would like to see tolls be tax deductible.

### *Expenditure of potential new revenue*

- Many commenters feel that all revenue from value pricing should be spent on new infrastructure, with some commenters noting

#### Quotes from comments about revenue and taxes:

*"You had money before constructing the bridges through taxpayer revenue. We already pay way too many high taxes that don't maintain the roadways, this toll would be another burden."*

*"No tolls. Our local taxes should pay for our roads. We have to do with what we have."*

*"We should use tolling for the new road, don't use tolling for existing roads."*



that large infrastructure projects should be higher priority than minor improvements.

- Some others advocated for revenue to be spent on enhancing multi-modal options.

### Traffic Diversion

Approximately 3 percent of comments discussed diversion of congestion from I-5 and I-205 to local roadways.

- Many comments expressed concern that pricing I-5 or I-205 would divert traffic onto neighborhood roadways as people try to avoid the toll.
- Many said diversion is already happening because of the congestion conditions on the freeways.
- Some felt that value pricing will increase diversion and reduce safety on local streets.
- Some expressed concerns about safety in neighborhoods if congestion is further diverted onto local streets, disproportionately affecting communities of color who are concentrated near freeways.

#### Quote from comments about diversion:

*"Portland just started a program to decrease deaths from accidents. And now you will be redirecting many more cars to streets away from freeways. Increased traffic on streets and people taking shortcuts through neighborhoods will lead to more accidents and possibly deaths. Does not make sense."*

*"This encourages unsafe driving. This region cannot control their anger properly and will certainly overreact to tolls in place and lose their {minds}. They will direct their anxiety and rage at maneuvering around the city to avoid tolls."*

### Public engagement

It was recommended that multiple liaisons be engaged to include as many participants as possible. Approximately 1 percent of open-ended comments mentioned the desire for continued outreach to communities of color.