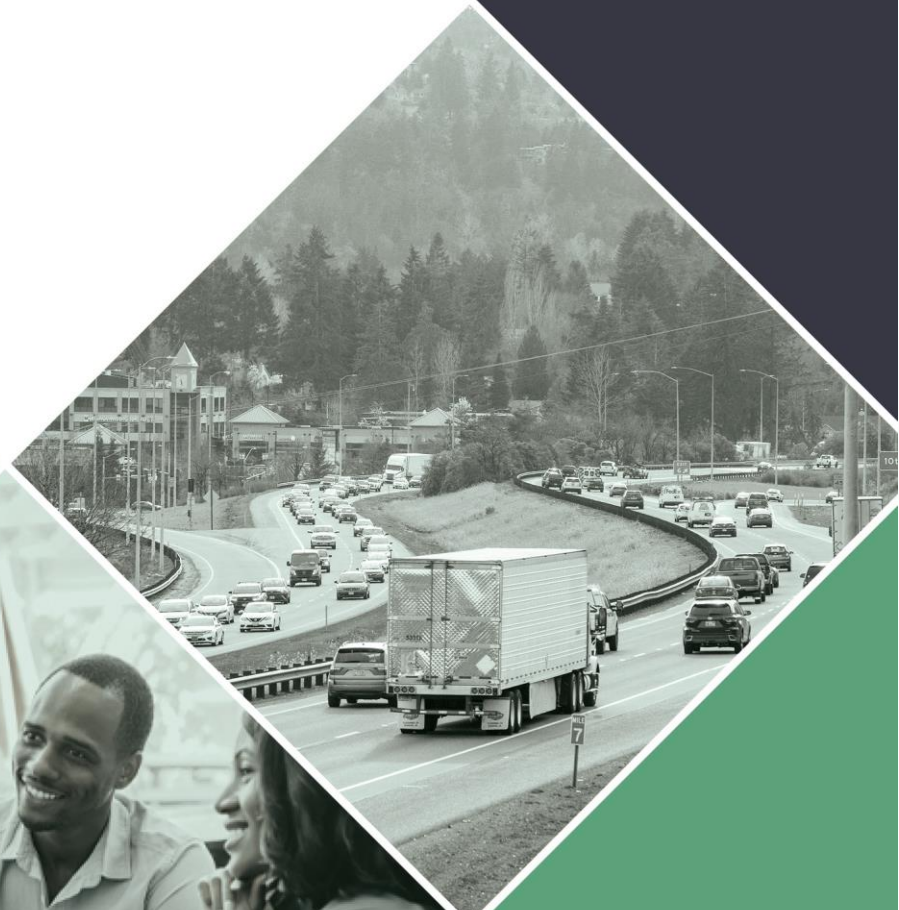


Regional Mobility Pricing Project

Spring 2022 Engagement Report

September 2022



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September 2022

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



WSP USA
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1600
Portland, OR 97204

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Table of Contents

1	Report Purpose	1
2	Project Context.....	2
2.1	Equity and Low-Income Toll Report	4
3	Opportunities for Engagement.....	5
3.1	Purpose of Engagement.....	5
3.2	Public Survey.....	5
3.3	Community Engagement Liaison Discussion Groups	5
3.4	Community-Based Organization Discussion Group	6
3.5	Stakeholder Interviews	7
3.6	Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee	7
3.7	Other Activities.....	7
4	Stakeholder and Public Notification.....	9
4.1	Social Media: Paid and Unpaid Posts	9
4.2	Paid Advertising in Regional and Multicultural Publications.....	9
4.3	Direct Outreach	10
4.4	Email and Web	10
5	Results by the Numbers.....	11
5.1	Total Engagement	11
5.2	Public Comments	11
6	Key Takeaways.....	12
7	Approach to Analyzing Survey Results	15
7.1	Data Assessment	15
7.2	Data Integrity	15
8	Survey Demographics.....	16
8.1	Responses by Geography	16
8.2	Responses by Income	18
8.3	Responses by Disability Status	20
8.4	Responses by Race	20
8.5	Responses by Mode of Transportation	22
8.6	Responses by Use of I-5 and I-205.....	22
9	Survey: Multiple Choice Results	23
9.1	Overall Sentiment	23
9.2	Setting a Toll Minimum	23
9.3	Setting a Toll Maximum	24
9.4	Eligibility for a Low-income Program	24
9.5	Discount and Credit Options for a Low-income Program	25
9.6	Discount or Credits for Other Vehicle Types	26
9.7	Use of Toll Revenue	27
9.8	Higher Tolls for Community-identified Priorities	28
9.9	Toll Revenue for Non-Highway Uses	29
10	Survey: Write-in Comments and Public Comment Results.....	31
10.1	Overall Comment Numbers	31
10.2	Revenue and Taxes	32
10.3	Fairness	33
10.4	Tolling Implementation	34
10.5	Rerouting and diversion.....	37
10.6	Trust and accountability.....	38

10.7	Multimodal Transportation	39
10.8	Equity	41
10.9	Expanding Capacity	43
10.10	Personal Financial Impacts	45
10.11	Purpose and Need	46
10.12	Congestion Observations and Impacts	47
10.13	Decision-making Process and Public Engagement	48
10.14	Economic impacts	50
10.15	Other Congestion Management Ideas	52
10.16	Safety	53
10.17	Environmental Impacts	54
10.18	Project Scope and Objectives	56
10.19	Other Examples of Tolling	57
10.20	Proposed Alternatives	58
10.21	Other Concurrent Projects	59
10.22	Freight	60
11	Community Engagement Liaison Discussion Group Feedback	62
11.1	General Questions and Comments	62
11.2	Eligibility for a Low-income Program	63
11.3	Discount and Credit Options for a Low-income Program	64
11.4	Enrollment Options for a Low-income Program	65
11.5	Barriers to Participation in a Low-income Program	66
11.6	Ensuring Equity in the Toll Program	67
11.7	Additional Toll Program Goals	67
11.8	Strategies for Achieving Climate Goals	69
11.9	Strategies for Achieving Equity Goals	69
11.10	Benefits to Southwest Washington	70
12	Community-Based Organization Discussion Group Feedback	71
12.1	Barriers to Participation in a Low-income Program	71
12.2	Best Practices	71
12.3	Enrollment in a Low-income Program	71
12.4	Revenue for Community-identified Priorities	72
13	Stakeholder Interviews	73
13.1	Eligibility for a Low-income Program	73
13.2	Applications, Enrollment, and Communication	73
13.3	Successes in Program Administration	74
13.4	Challenges in Program Administration	74
13.5	Barriers for Low-income Programs	74
14	Equity Mobility Advisory Committee	76
14.1	Summary of Feedback	76
15	Other Activities	77
15.1	Briefings	77
15.2	Tabling Events	77
16	Response to Key Takeaways	78
16.1	General Concern About Tolling	78
16.2	Use of Toll Revenue	78
16.3	Low-income Program and Benefits	79
16.4	Low-income Program Enrollment Process	80
16.5	Transit Options	80
16.6	Information on Tolling Details	81
16.7	Effectiveness to Address Congestion	81
16.8	Questions About Funding	82

16.9	Fairness and Impacts	83
16.10	Decision Process and Public Input	83
17	Next Steps.....	85

Figures

Figure 2-1	I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project Area.....	3
Figure 2-2	I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project Timeline.....	4
Figure 4-1	Instagram Story Post.....	9
Figure 4-2	Digital Advertisement	10
Figure 8-1	Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents by ZIP Code	17
Figure 8-2	Geographic Distribution by ZIP Code of Survey Respondents with Household Incomes under \$50,000	19
Figure 8-3	Geographic Distribution by ZIP Code of Survey Respondents who Identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.....	21
Figure 9-1	How much do you agree or disagree with setting a minimum fee (for example, 50 cents) for using 1-5 and 1-205, regardless of the distance traveled?.....	23
Figure 9-2	How much do you agree or disagree with setting a daily or monthly maximum toll?	24
Figure 9-3	Who should be eligible for the low-income discount or credit?	25
Figure 9-4	How much do you agree or disagree with the following options for a low-income toll program?	26
Figure 9-5	Which additional vehicle type do you prefer most to potentially receive a toll discount or credit? (Select one)	27
Figure 9-6	How important do you think it is that congestion pricing revenue contributes to the following in the Portland metropolitan region?	28
Figure 9-7	How supportive would you be of a slightly higher toll rate if it meant increased investments for community-identified priorities, such as improved sidewalks or transit facilities near the tolled highways?.....	29
Figure 9-8	What is your preference on how to allocate tolling revenues for non-highway improvements? (Please select your two top choices).....	30
Figure 11-1	Screenshot from the Chinese Discussion Group.	62
Figure 15-1	Tabling at the Alder Elementary School food pantry.....	77

Tables

Table 3-1	Discussion Groups Held as Part of the Tolling Spring Engagement	6
Table 3-2	Elected Officials and Regional and Technical Committees	7
Table 3-3	Community-Based Organization Briefings	8
Table 3-4	Tabling Events.....	8
Table 3-5	Other Comments Received between April 6 and May 27, 2022	8
Table 5-1	Total Engagement by Channel.....	11
Table 5-2	Total Responses by Engagement Activity.....	11
Table 8-1	Geographic Distribution for Survey Respondents and the Portland Metropolitan Area	16
Table 8-2	Income Distribution for Survey Respondents and the Portland Metropolitan Area.....	18
Table 8-3	Disability Status for Survey Respondents and the Portland Metropolitan Area	20
Table 8-4	Race Distribution for Survey Respondents and the Portland Metropolitan Area	20
Table 8-5	Common Mode of Transportation for Survey Respondents in the Portland Metro Area	22
Table 8-6	Use of I-5/I-205 in the Portland Metropolitan Area for Survey Respondents	22
Table 10-1	Count of Comments by Topic.....	31
Table 11-1	ODOT wants to make it easy for drivers experiencing financial hardship to apply for a discount. Which of these options would you support?	63

Table 11-2 Which of the following options would you support for a low-income toll program? 64

Table 11-3 Ranking of Options Compared between Discussion Groups and Surveys 65

Table 11-4 One of the goals of a program for people experiencing financial hardship is to make it easy for participants to enroll. Which option would be most convenient? 66

Table 11-5 The Oregon Toll Program will apply congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 to achieve congestion management and generate revenue. Which of these additional goals are important to you? 68

Table 11-6 Ranking of Options for Discussion Groups and Surveys 68

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
I-5	Interstate 5
I-205	Interstate 205
CBO	Community-based Organization
CEL	Community Engagement Liaison
EMAC	Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee
HB	House Bill
HOV	High-occupancy vehicles
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
OTC	Oregon Transportation Commission
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

1 Report Purpose

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is pursuing congestion pricing on Interstate 5 (I-5) and I-205 as part of its long-term strategy to manage congestion and sustainably raise revenue for roadway and multimodal investments. Planning is occurring on a proposal to toll all lanes of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan area.

In spring 2022, the Regional Mobility Pricing Project team shared information and invited public feedback as part of program development. We asked stakeholders and the public to weigh in about questions to help shape a congestion pricing concept for the Portland metropolitan region and about ways to advance an equitable toll program, including how to best develop a toll discount or credit program for people experiencing low incomes.

This report compiles and summarizes the public input we received through engagement efforts this spring. We received and compiled information from more than 12,000 survey responses as well as results of discussion groups, letters, emails, voicemails, and comments at meetings and briefings between April 6 and May 27, 2022.

ODOT and the project team will use the information summarized in this report in several ways:

- **Environmental review process.** Public input is being used to inform the Regional Mobility Pricing Project concept that will move forward for detailed analysis in the environmental review phase required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). That process is expected to begin in fall 2022.
- **Options to Develop a Low-Income Toll Program and Best Practices for Implementation (Low-Income Toll Report).** Public input is shaping strategies to minimize the burden of toll fees for people experiencing low incomes and has informed the Low-Income Toll Report that is due to the Oregon Legislature and Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) in September 2022.
- **Equity recommendations.** Public input was provided to the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) as members finalized recommendations to advance transportation equity for historically excluded and underserved communities as part of the I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project. The committee delivered these recommendations to the OTC in July 2022.

2 Project Context

Congestion pricing, using variable-rate tolls, is part of ODOT's long-term strategy to manage congestion and sustainably raise revenue for roadway and multimodal investments. ODOT has two toll projects underway: the I-205 Toll Project and the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (Figure 2-1). The I-205 Toll Project will complete the I-205 Improvements Project using variable-rate tolls on the Abernethy and Tualatin River Bridges to raise revenue and manage congestion. The Regional Mobility Pricing Project evaluates tolling all lanes of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan area to manage traffic congestion in a manner that will raise revenue for priority transportation projects that will improve mobility.

The State of Oregon began to explore tolling in 2017, when the Oregon Legislature approved House Bill (HB) 2017, known as Keep Oregon Moving. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature adopted another bill, HB 3055, which clarified and reinforced the transportation direction from HB 2017. These bills commit hundreds of millions of dollars to projects that will manage traffic congestion and improve the transportation system statewide, including improvements to highways, the freight network, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The bills also direct the OTC to pursue and implement tolling I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan region for traffic congestion management and transportation improvements. In 2018, ODOT completed a feasibility study (with substantial public input) and concluded that tolls could help meet priority goals.

The Regional Mobility Pricing Project is in the initial planning stage, and the formal environmental review is expected to begin later this year. The I-205 Toll Project is moving forward with development of the Environmental Assessment, which will be available for public review and comment in fall 2022. Beginning in late 2024, drivers will begin to pay tolls to drive on I-205 near the Abernethy Bridge and by 2025, tolls could launch on the remaining sections of I-205 and I-5 in the Portland metropolitan area.

WHAT IS CONGESTION PRICING?

The term "congestion pricing" describes a type of variable-rate tolling that aims to improve mobility, travel times, and reliability by charging a higher price during peak traffic periods. The higher fee—typically implemented along with transit and other multimodal improvements—encourages some drivers to consider using other travel options such as carpools or transit or change their travel time to other less congested times of the day or to not make the trip at all.

Figure 2-1 I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project Area



2.1 Equity and Low-Income Toll Report

To ensure equitable I-205 and I-5 toll projects and processes, ODOT convened an Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC). One of the key roles of the committee was to develop a set of equity recommendations to send to the OTC. Public engagement around tolling was both informed by, and informed, equity recommendations, which EMAC sent to the OTC in July 2022.

As part of equity considerations, the OTC and Oregon Legislature directed ODOT to identify equitable solutions for people who are less able to pay a toll. Through the first half of 2022, ODOT developed the Low-Income Toll Report to provide options for consideration for a low-income toll program. The report identifies options in the following areas:

- Income eligibility and verification.
- Types of benefits (e.g., discount, exemption, credit, free trips, etc.).
- Design of an inclusive, effective system.
- Launching and monitoring the low-income toll benefits.

The report will be delivered to the OTC and Oregon Legislature by September 2022.

Figure 2-2 I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project Timeline



3 Opportunities for Engagement

3.1 Purpose of Engagement

The purpose of this phase of engagement was to build awareness of tolling work in the region and gather input on the following:

- Elements to help inform the congestion pricing concept for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project
- Potential toll discounts or credits for select types of vehicles or users, including people experiencing low incomes
- How to best respond to tolling-related needs for historically excluded and underserved communities

ODOT's Regional Mobility Pricing Project team conducted the following activities to achieve these goals.

3.2 Public Survey

We distributed an online survey between April 28 and May 16, 2022, through a variety of channels as described in Section 4. The survey was the primary tool for collecting stakeholder and public feedback. We designed the survey as an informational tool with a description of the project, an area map, and diagram of how congestion pricing would work. The survey included multiple choice questions for the following topics: travel behavior, shaping congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205, toll discounts and credits, community benefits, and use of toll revenue. We provided one write-in question at the end for respondents to share any additional feedback with the project team.

The survey was available in English, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. We partnered with the Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) and EMAC to advise on the survey questions and approach and the use of plain language, and to promote participation. Community liaisons and an engagement subconsultant were employed to help distribute and invite input via the survey. Community liaisons distributed the survey via social media and email, and by inviting discussion group participants to take the survey and share with their friends and family. Based on requests from the community liaisons, paper surveys were provided in English, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese, with responses entered into the online survey collector link. Additionally, an engagement subconsultant for the Native American community conducted 15 one-on-one interviews to gather input via the survey tool. We also partnered with the CELs to share and distribute surveys at two tabling events held at food pantries in the Portland metropolitan area, described further in Section 15.

The survey received 12,114 responses. See Sections 9 and 10 for a summary of the survey results. See the Survey Appendix for examples of the survey questions in each of the languages. See the Survey Open-Ended Comments Appendix to review all of the survey comments.

3.3 Community Engagement Liaison Discussion Groups

Community liaisons recruited participants and facilitated eight, 90-minute virtual discussion groups for in-depth engagement. The events included a mix of live-polling questions and group discussion. Community liaisons provided in-language interpretation and translation of presentation materials, as appropriate, for discussion group participants. As an incentive to join in the discussion groups, we provided gift cards to participants.

The discussion groups focused on historically excluded and underserved communities and included focused discussions with youth, people living with disabilities, people who identify as Black/African American, and Black, Indigenous, people of color.¹ Discussion groups were also held in languages other than English to engage the Latin American, Russian/Slavic, Chinese, and Vietnamese communities.

Between five and ten individuals participated in each of the eight discussion groups. See Section 9 for a summary of the discussions. See the CEL Discussion Group Appendix for full summaries of each of the discussion groups.

Table 3-1 Discussion Groups Held as Part of the Tolling Spring Engagement

Group	Date	Attendees
Chinese	4/16/22	10
Slavic	4/19/22	10
Spanish	4/21/22	10
Vietnamese	4/22/22	10
Black/African American	4/23/22	5
People with Disabilities	4/24/22	8
Youth	4/26/22	9
Black, Indigenous, People of Color	5/2/22	8

3.4 Community-Based Organization Discussion Group

The team held a 90-minute discussion group with representatives from community-based organizations (CBOs) serving historically excluded and underserved communities. This discussion focused on sharing best practices to administering low-income programs and common barriers that the organizations encountered in supporting participation in these programs. The discussion group included live interpretation in Spanish. As an incentive for CBO staff to participate, we provided gift cards to participants.

The meeting included a presentation about congestion relief projects planned in the Portland metropolitan area and status updates for key projects, including tolling. EMAC representatives shared considerations around equity strategies for tolling, including discounts or credits for people experiencing low incomes. A facilitator then led a discussion to invite feedback about potential barriers to participation in a low-income toll program and best practices from similar programs to increase access to benefits and encourage enrollment.

Representatives from the following organizations participated in the discussion group:

- Black United Fund of Oregon
- Community Alliance of Tenants
- East County Rising
- Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
- Oregon Latino Health Coalition
- Community Alliance of Tenants
- Ride Connection

¹ A discussion group with the Native American community was planned; however, due to scheduling limitations, the community liaison instead held one-on-one interviews with Native American community members to collect feedback using the survey tool.

- Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives

See Section 12 for a summary of their comments. See the CEL Discussion Group Appendix for a full summary of the discussion group.

3.5 Stakeholder Interviews

The team conducted a series of interviews with state, local, and federal agencies that administer low-income programs and regional social service providers who serve low-income communities. We met with administering agencies to gather information to help inform best practices for establishing qualifications, collecting fees, and making an accessible low-income toll program. We provided questions in advance to interview participants, with tailored questions for social service providers and administering agencies. The interviews with social service providers served to collect feedback on ways to develop an accessible and equitable tolling program and informed the Low-Income Toll Report.

Seven agency representatives participated in interviews. See Chapter 13 for a summary of their feedback. See the Stakeholder Interview Appendix for full summaries of each of the interviews.

3.6 Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee

The EMAC is advising the OTC and ODOT on how tolls on I-205 and I-5—in combination with other transportation demand management strategies—can include benefits for historically excluded and underserved communities. EMAC meetings are open to the public. During this period of engagement for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project, the EMAC provided guidance on our survey and discussion group questions. We also invited EMAC members to participate in discussion groups. Initial key themes from the discussion groups were shared at the EMAC’s April 2022 meeting. An overview of spring engagement results was shared with an EMAC subcommittee on June 13, 2022, and at the EMAC meeting on June 22, 2022.

See Section 14 for a summary of feedback from the EMAC members.

3.7 Other Activities

3.7.1 Briefings Related to Engagement Topics

ODOT continuously engages with stakeholders through briefings with technical and policy committees and CBOs. We participated in several briefings during spring 2022 to share information about tolling, to address frequently asked questions, and to invite questions and comments. Briefings will continue through 2022.

As of May 27, 2022, 12 briefings focused on tolling and related projects: Eight with regional and technical committees and four with CBOs. See Section 15.1 for a summary of their feedback. See the Briefings Appendix for full summaries of each of the briefings.

Table 3-2 Elected Officials and Regional and Technical Committees

Group	Date
Clackamas County Staff	4/7/22
Metro Council	4/14/22
C4 Metro Subcommittee	4/21/22
Metro Council	4/21/22
Tigard Transportation Strategy Team	5/12/22

Group	Date
Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation	5/19/22
Metro Council	5/24/22

Table 3-3 Community-Based Organization Briefings

Group	Date
Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) ACHIEVE Coalition	4/6/22
Bolton Neighborhood Association	4/19/22
Clark County Commission on Aging	4/20/22
Joint Chambers of Commerce – West Linn, Oregon City, and Lake Oswego	5/25/22

3.7.2 Tabling Events

We held tabling events in May 2022 two food pantries, which were hosted by Metropolitan Family Services in East Portland. During the tabling events, we encouraged community members to take fact sheets, to share comments or ask questions, and to complete the survey via an electronic device or printed copy. English was not the primary language for most attendees, so we provided surveys and fact sheets in five different languages. We were able to partner with community liaisons to have Spanish and Chinese interpreters at the events.

Approximately 65 people were engaged at the two tabling events. See Section 15.2 for summaries of the events. See the Tabling Events Appendix for full summaries of each of the events.

Table 3-4 Tabling Events

Event	Date	People Engaged
Alder Elementary Food Pantry	5/11/22	20
Parklane Elementary Food Pantry	5/13/22	45

3.7.3 Other Comments: Emails, Voicemails, and Web Form Submissions

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

Between April 6 and May 27, 2022, 149 people provided input through these channels. These comments were analyzed and categorized with the survey write-in comments and a summary of this information can be found in Section 10. See the Email, Web, and Voicemail Comments Appendix to review all of the comments received.

Table 3-5 Other Comments Received between April 6 and May 27, 2022

Event	Total Received
Emails	44
Voicemails	4
Web comment form submissions	61

4 Stakeholder and Public Notification

We advertised the survey through several regional and multicultural publications. Additionally, we shared information about the engagement opportunities through ODOT information channels, including the Oregon Tolling Program website, emails, and social media. We also encouraged EMAC, regional agency staff, CELs, and CBOs to share information about input opportunities with their networks.

4.1 Social Media: Paid and Unpaid Posts

ODOT promoted the survey through its Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn channels, using a combination of organic posts and paid Facebook and Instagram posts. The Facebook post was boosted to reach Facebook users in the greater Portland metropolitan area north to Clark County. We also posted a Facebook ad in Spanish. On Instagram, we used the “Instagram Story” feature to promote the surveys (Figure 4-1), with a “swipe up” option for users to take the survey. We boosted Instagram stories to reach a larger audience in the Portland metropolitan area. A notice about the survey was also posted through NextDoor. The Engagement Tools and Performance Appendix provides additional detail.

Figure 4-1 Instagram Story Post



4.2 Paid Advertising in Regional and Multicultural Publications

We placed print and digital advertisements (Figure 4-2) in seven regional and multicultural publications in the Portland metropolitan area. These publications included The Columbian, OregonLive (digital version of The Oregonian), The Portland Observer, Portland Tribune, and The Skanner with translated advertisements being placed in El Latino de Hoy and Viet NNN. Additional publications were considered but print deadlines and/or publication dates did not align with the survey timeframe. The Engagement Tools and Performance Appendix provides additional detail.

Figure 4-2 Digital Advertisement



4.3 Direct Outreach

In addition to traditional advertising and social media, we developed an outreach toolkit and distributed it to community organizations and local agencies across multiple channels so that they could share survey information with the communities they serve. The outreach toolkit included an overview of tolling in Oregon, email content language, social media content, links to the survey in various languages, and additional tolling background links. We sent the outreach toolkit to the following groups and organizations:

- EMAC members
- Regional agency staff
- City and county newsletter contacts
- Over 140 community organizations across the Portland metropolitan area, including culturally specific organizations, health and social service agencies, local chambers of commerce, non-profits, neighborhood groups, and faith-based organizations

4.4 Email and Web

We encouraged survey participation through broadcast emails and a newsletter update. We promoted the survey in an email update to the Oregon Toll Program Listserv computer software on April 28, 2022, followed by a reminder notice in the May 11, 2022, edition of ODOT's Urban Mobility Strategy newsletter. A banner ad with a link to the survey was included on the OregonTolling.org homepage during the survey timeframe, and a banner ad, link, and description were included on the [Regional Mobility Pricing Project homepage](http://RegionalMobilityPricingProject.org), with links to the survey in available languages.

5 Results by the Numbers

5.1 Total Engagement

Table 5-1 Total Engagement by Channel

Activity	Engagement
Facebook boosted post	166,656, views
Facebook Spanish ad	42,728 views
Instagram posted stories	104,409 views
Webpage	13,704 visits
Toll Program Email Update	7,334 recipients
Urban Mobility Office Newsletter	12,881 recipients
Discussion groups	78 participants
Stakeholder interviews	7 agency representatives
Direct outreach	143 organizations
Tabling events	65 people engaged
Community briefings	53 attendees

5.2 Public Comments

Table 5-2 Total Responses by Engagement Activity

Response Type	Number
Online survey responses	12,114
Open-end survey comments	8,313
Emailed comments	44
Voicemails	2
Web comment form submissions	104

6 Key Takeaways

The focus of public and stakeholder engagement in spring 2022 was to gather input related to 1) shaping the congestion pricing concept, 2) developing a method for implementing a low-income toll program, and 3) how tolling can advance equity. This section summarizes overarching themes heard during this period of engagement. Sections 6 through 13 of this report provide additional detail on the input received through the various engagement activities. The following are the key themes that emerged across all of the outreach activities. Section 16 provides planned actions and responses from ODOT related to the overarching themes.

Many respondents indicated general opposition to tolls and an interest in paying as little as possible.

During discussion groups and in write-in comments, many respondents expressed concern about the impact of tolls on their personal financial situations and noted that they would not be able to change their travel habits to avoid tolls. Survey respondents generally disagreed (70%) with a minimum toll, even if it could provide additional congestion relief, and also generally disagreed (66%) with paying slightly higher tolls if it meant increased investments in community-identified priorities, such as sidewalk or transit facilities near tolled highways.

“I don't have the option of working from home like so many people these days and this is just another added cost for me that will just make it more difficult for me to support my family of four.”

– Survey respondent

Mixed opinions emerged on how toll revenue should be used, although roadway safety is a general priority. Respondents provided various suggestions about how toll revenue should be allocated, with fairly strong sentiments on all sides. In discussion groups and write-in comments, many respondents said that any toll revenues should go back only into improving and expanding roadway capacity. When asked about how to allocate toll revenue, the only option that over half (51%) of respondents agreed on was *safe travel*. This was the top priority for nearly all different demographic groups. In write-in comments, safety concerns were most often related to concerns about rerouting.

At the same time, many write-in comments stated that toll revenue should explicitly not go toward increasing highway capacity, advocating for transit or other multimodal investments. When asked about using revenues for non-highway improvements, a comparable number of respondents said *none of the above* (39%), and *transit improvements* (35%), the two most common answers.

“Toll investments should go back into improving roads and safety for those paying the tolls.”

– Survey respondent

Support exists for offering low-income benefits to a wide range of people that may be financially affected, including middle-income drivers. Overall, 66% of survey respondents agreed with providing a low-income discount or credit, a sentiment that was shared by discussion group participants. Generally, more survey respondents were in favor of a higher-income threshold (36%) for discounts compared to a lower income threshold (19%), even with the acknowledgment that drivers may not experience the same degree of travel-time and reliability improvements. In write-in comments and during discussion groups, many respondents used phrases such as “working class” or “middle-income,” noting that these groups may not qualify as low income but that they could still experience severe financial impacts from tolling and should receive benefits.

Participants requested a simple and accessible enrollment process for low-income toll benefits that includes customer support and partnerships with CBOs. Through discussion groups and stakeholder interviews, there was broad agreement that requiring people to enroll for any type of low-income benefits is a barrier unto itself. Participants suggested creating a system that makes it as easy as possible to apply for low-income toll benefits. Some organizational representatives noted that their organizations sometimes use automatic enrollment in partnership with other programs, though they emphasized that disenrollment in one should not automatically mean disenrollment in the other. Several discussion groups also highlighted language barriers and the importance of translating application information and keeping it simple, clear, and to the point. There was broad agreement that partnering with CBOs would be critical to providing a trusted source for people to learn about and assist with applying for benefits.

Respondents expressed that transit is not a viable alternative to driving alone and paying a toll unless there are significant improvements to make it more accessible and convenient. Many discussion group participants and survey write-in comments noted that they would consider transit, but currently they did not see it as a viable alternative to driving since it adds significant travel time to a trip and/or there is limited access to transit near their home, work, or other destinations, particularly for those that live farther from the city center. When asked about various low-income discount or credit options, survey participants agreed with toll credits (45%) and a toll cap (44%) more frequently than transit credits (40%). This sentiment was more pronounced for respondents experiencing low incomes. Many respondents said that transit improvements should be made before or alongside the implementation of tolling. When asked how toll revenue should be allocated for non-highway improvements, transit improvements (35%) was one of the top answers.

“If people qualify for another low-income program (such as SNAP), they should just automatically get the low-income toll discount. People feel down about themselves when they are constantly having to apply for programs due to their lack of income.”

– Discussion group participant

Frustration surfaced that information is not yet available about the toll program, especially anticipated toll rates, use of revenues, and expected impacts to surface roads. Respondents shared overall questions and concerns about the unknowns of tolling. During discussion groups, many participants asked questions such as “What will the toll rates be?” and “How will the money be used?” Some participants noted that it was difficult to answer survey questions about tolling without more information. Many write-in survey comments also reflected this sentiment, with many people expressing concern about how tolling might affect them financially or how tolling may affect surface roads in their neighborhoods.

Many respondents said tolling is not the right solution to address congestion. Many survey write-in comments and discussion group participants questioned whether tolling would actually improve congestion. Respondents related personal stories about their travel patterns, noting that using alternative modes or traveling at alternative times were not realistic options due to the travel distances, as well as work and professional responsibilities, and thought this inflexibility would be the common for most travelers. Many respondents also shared experiences with tolling in other places around the country and noted that they still witnessed congestion in those places, even with tolls.

Many questions were asked about why new funding from tolls is needed when ODOT has existing funding sources for roadway and multimodal improvements.

Many write-in survey comments and discussion group participants expressed frustration with what they considered an additional tax. Many respondents questioned why more revenue was needed when they were paying through other revenue sources, particularly mentioning high gas taxes, income taxes, and property taxes in Oregon. Respondents often expressed a level of distrust with how the state manages tax revenues and have little interest in paying more. For example, as mentioned above, 66% opposed paying slightly higher tolls for community-identified improvements and of those, most (58%) marked *strongly opposed*.

“We are already paying enough taxes. Where did the federal money go for our roads and bridges?”

– *Survey respondent*

Many respondents said that toll proposals are unfair and strategies are needed to lessen potential toll impacts, especially for communities that rely on I-5 and I-205.

In write-in comments, respondents often mentioned terms related to fairness, particularly in relation to areas in the southern part of the metropolitan region, such as Oregon City, West Linn, and other parts of Clackamas County. Respondents commented that these areas have limited alternatives to traveling on the proposed toll routes. Respondents said that they would be disproportionately affected because they would have to pay tolls more often to get around. Additionally, there were concerns about the impacts of diversions in these communities. When asked about the how toll revenue should be allocated, Clackamas County survey respondents said that limiting rerouting was more important (51%) than any other option.

Respondents also expressed frustration that I-5 and I-205 would be tolled, while other major roadways in the metropolitan area, namely US 26 and I-84, would not be tolled. In discussion groups as well as survey write-in comments, respondents also expressed concern about a perceived unfair burden on middle-income households. These households may not qualify for discounts or credits but could still experience a significant financial burden from tolls.

Respondents shared questions and concerns about the decision process to date and how public input would meaningfully shape the proposed toll project.

In discussion groups and survey write-in comments, many respondents expressed concern that decisions had already been made and their voices would not inform the proposed tolling projects. Many respondents asked about why tolling was moving forward, particularly in light of the public opposition. Many respondents also questioned why the public had not, or would not, have an opportunity to vote on whether to toll I-5 and I-205. Respondents were interested in seeing public input meaningfully addressed in the tolling projects and decisions about tolling.

7 Approach to Analyzing Survey Results

7.1 Data Assessment

We combined the survey results from the English, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese versions of the survey as a complete set of data (total responses). We then analyzed responses by each of the demographic questions in the survey, including geography, transportation and roadway use, disability status, income, and race/ethnicity. These questions were optional, so survey results for these subgroups represented only the respondents who choose to self-identify. ZIP codes were combined to compare county-level data for Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, and Clark Counties.

To analyze results for low-income respondents, we combined data for respondents who marked their household income as either 0 – \$25,000 or \$25,000 – \$50,000. We chose these amounts to align as closely as possible with the 200% of the federal poverty level, which is \$55,500 for a family of four. The survey did not ask people to indicate their family size.

To analyze results for Black, Indigenous and people of color respondents, we combined data for all respondents who marked either Hispanic/Latin American/Spanish, Black/African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, Middle Eastern or North African, or some other race, ethnicity, or origin.

Responses to one write-in survey question were categorized based on thematic topic. We categorized the comment submittals into multiple themes if more than one topic was discussed because most submittals referred to multiple topics. In reviewing additional write-in comments received via email, web form, and letter, the issues and questions raised did not differ significantly from the survey comments. Consequently, themes from all responses to write-in questions are summarized together.

7.2 Data Integrity

One of the goals of this engagement phase was to increase awareness of tolling in Oregon, to garner broad participation, and to engage with as many members of the public as possible. The survey was not designed to be statistically representative, meaning the respondent sample is not predictive of the opinions of the Portland metropolitan area population as a whole. We did not choose participants at random, but instead they opted in to take the survey. Thus, as is common with self-selection surveys, it is likely that respondents held stronger opinions about tolling or could be more affected by tolling when compared to the general population. The survey findings should be considered one data point of input and cross referenced with input received through all other engagement activities.

Responses to the survey were not limited by the internet protocol (IP) address, so that multiple members of the same household or workplace could submit feedback. We found no evidence of intentional multiple submissions when we reviewed data by IP address. We checked responses from the same IP address and most did not have the same survey responses or demographic information; six responses were removed as duplicates.

8 Survey Demographics

Overall, 12,114 people provided survey responses. Responses came from individuals across the metropolitan region and beyond, as well as from a wide spectrum of road users, ethnicities, income levels, and abilities. We asked respondents to self-report demographic data (ZIP code, income, ethnicity, travel patterns, and disability status). Respondents could choose to not answer the demographic questions.

Below, survey respondent demographics are compared to regional demographics when possible. The regional demographics are from the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Census data set and are defined as the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metropolitan Statistical Area.²

8.1 Responses by Geography

A total of 11,715 responses (approximately 97% of total survey responses) provided a ZIP code. The ZIP codes shared by respondents are grouped by county in the following table. Clackamas County was overrepresented among survey respondents, while Washington County and Clark County were underrepresented among survey respondents.

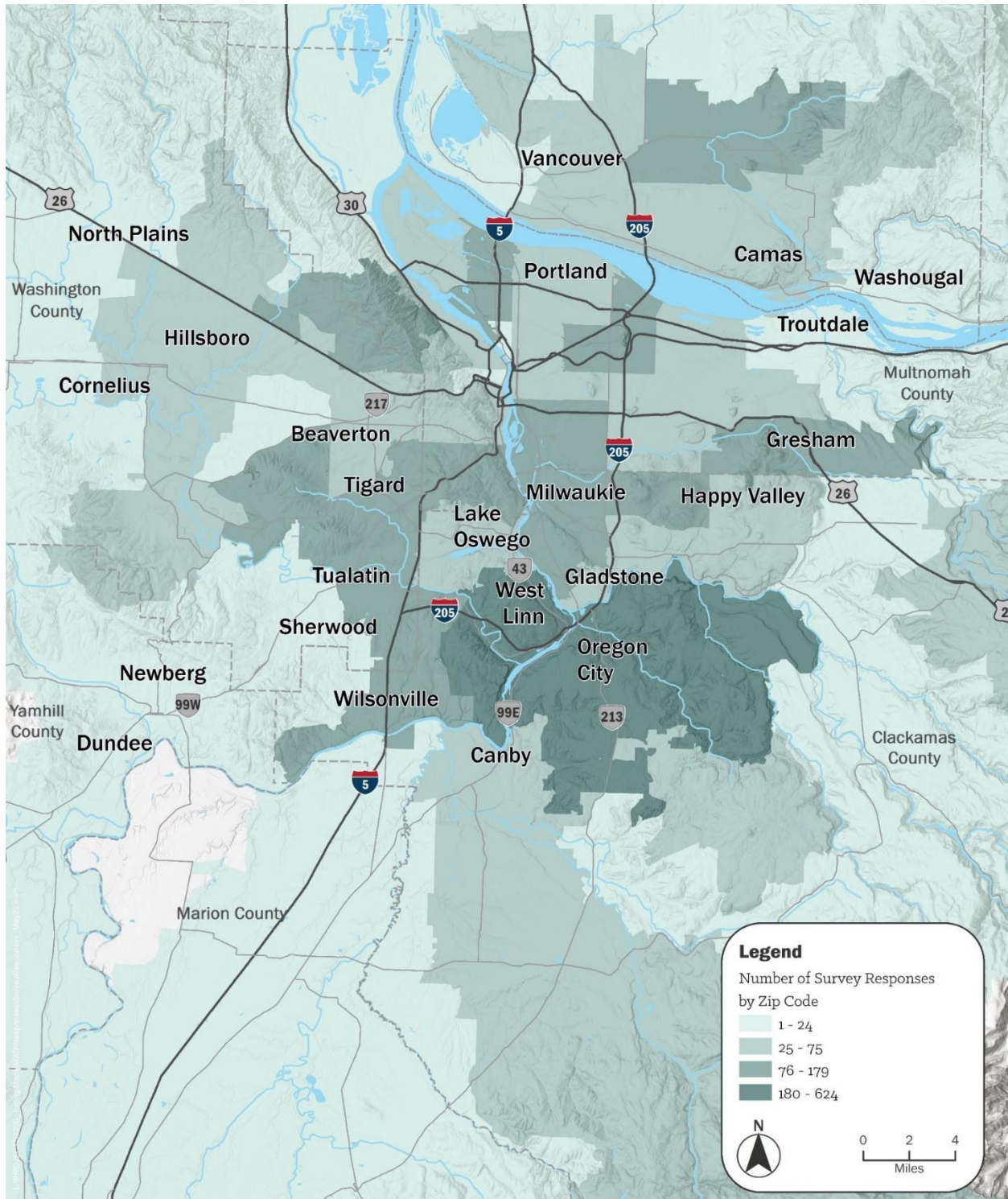
Table 8-1 Geographic Distribution for Survey Respondents and the Portland Metropolitan Area

County	Count of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Portland Metro Area Population
Multnomah County	4,195	36%	35%
Clackamas County	3,680	31%	18%
Washington County	1,748	15%	26%
Clark County	1,353	12%	22%
All Other Counties	739	7%	N/A
Total Responses	11,715	100%	

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

² <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US38900-portland-vancouver-hillsboro-or-wa-metro-area/>

Figure 8-1 Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents by ZIP Code



Note: Darker colors indicate ZIP codes with higher concentrations of survey respondents.

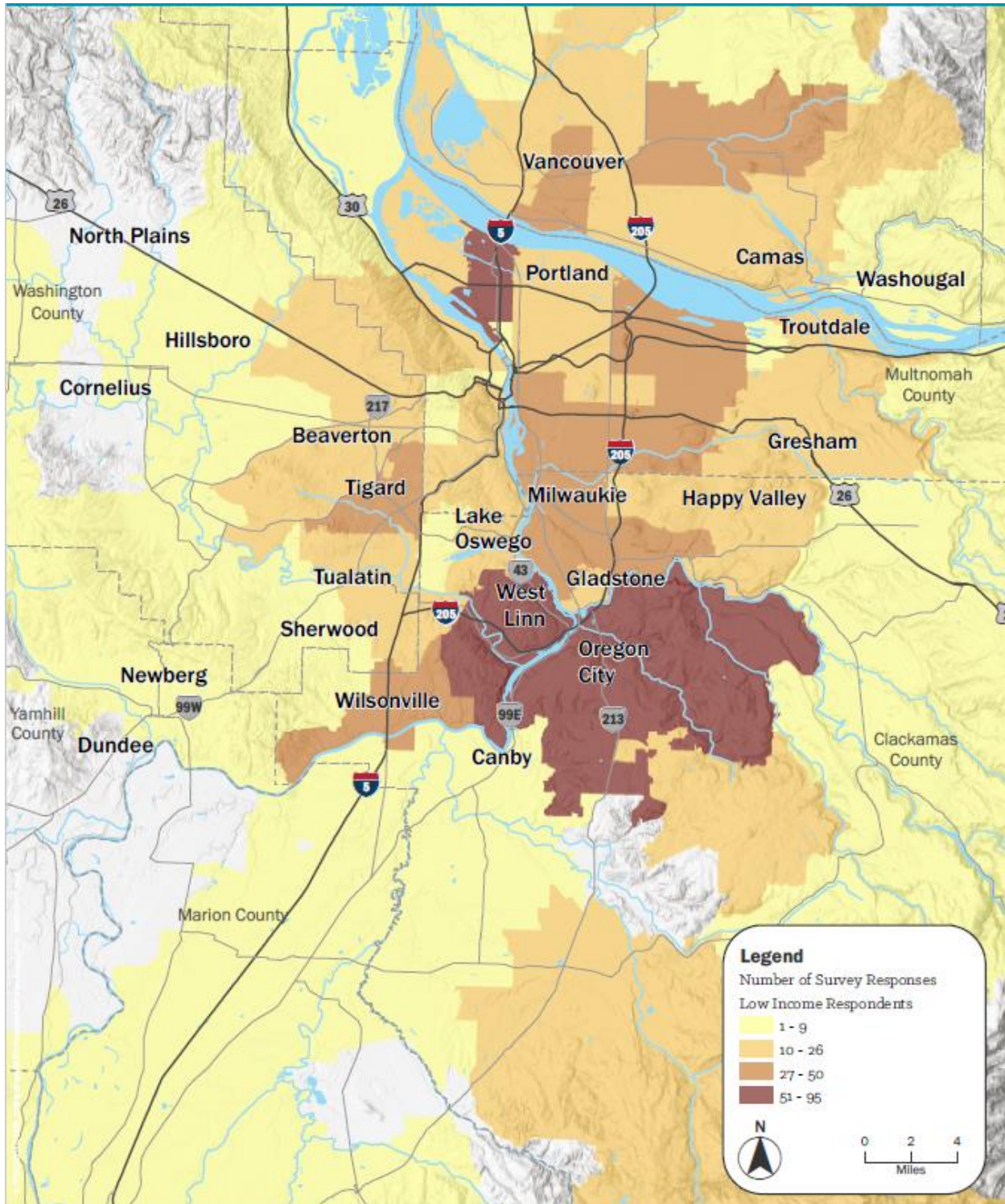
8.2 Responses by Income

A total of 7,379 respondents (approximately 61% of total survey respondents) provided their income. Survey respondents with households earning \$50,000 or less made up 23% of total respondents, while 31% of households earn \$50,000 or less in the Portland metropolitan area.

Table 8-2 Income Distribution for Survey Respondents and the Portland Metropolitan Area

Income	Count of Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents by Income	Percentage of County Population by Income
Portland Metropolitan Area Counties			
All Respondents (\$50,000 or more)	5,712	77%	69%
All Respondents (\$50,000 or less)	1,667	23%	31%
Multnomah County (\$50,000 or more)	2,272	78%	65%
Multnomah County (\$50,000 or less)	658	22%	35%
Clackamas County (\$50,000 or more)	1,638	78%	72%
Clackamas County (\$50,000 or less)	457	22%	28%
Washington County (\$50,000 or more)	825	80%	73%
Washington County (\$50,000 or less)	212	20%	27%
Clark County (\$50,000 or more)	650	74%	70%
Clark County (\$50,000 or less)	230	26%	30%
Outside the Portland metropolitan area (\$50,000 or more)	327	75%	N/A
Outside the Portland metropolitan area (\$50,000 or less)	110	25%	N/A
Total Responses	7,379	N/A	N/A

Figure 8-2 Geographic Distribution by ZIP Code of Survey Respondents with Household Incomes under \$50,000



Note: Darker colors indicate ZIP codes with higher concentrations of respondents with household incomes under \$50,000.

8.3 Responses by Disability Status

A total of 8,213 survey respondents (approximately 68% of survey respondents) provided their disability status. Of those, 18% said they identify as a person living with a disability. By comparison, 12% of the population in the Portland metropolitan area identifies as living with a disability.

Table 8-3 Disability Status for Survey Respondents and the Portland Metropolitan Area

Disability Status (Do you identify as a person living with a disability?)	Count of Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Portland metropolitan Area
Yes	1,472	18%	12%
No	6,741	82%	88%
Total Responses	8,213	100%	100%

8.4 Responses by Race

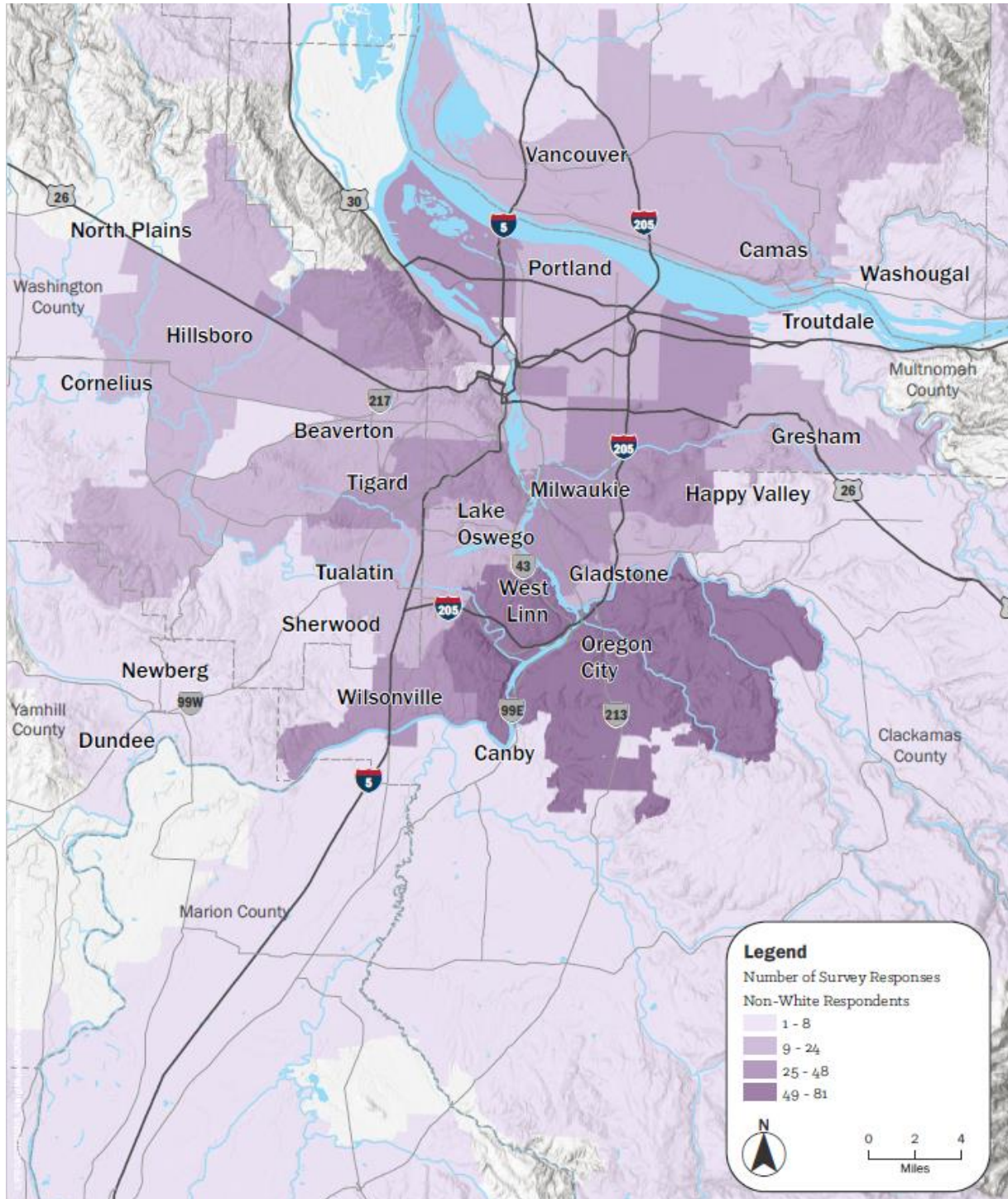
A total of 7,348 survey respondents (approximately 61% of survey respondents) shared their race/ethnicity. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. Survey respondents were roughly proportional to the Portland metropolitan area. However, about 8% of survey respondents identified as Hispanic, Latin American, or Spanish origin compared to 12% in the Portland metropolitan area population. Overall, about 26% of survey respondents identified as non-white, compared to 25% in the Portland metropolitan area.

Table 8-4 Race Distribution for Survey Respondents and the Portland Metropolitan Area

Race/Ethnicity	Count of Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Portland Metropolitan Area
White	6,099	83%	79%
Hispanic, Latin American, or Spanish origin	592	8%	12%
Black or African American	273	4%	3%
Asian	450	6%	7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	84	1%	0.05%
American Indian or Alaska Native	234	3%	0.07%
Middle Eastern or North African	73	1%	N/A
Some other race, ethnicity, or origin	193	3%	3%
Self-described	53	1%	N/A
Total Non-White	1,899	26%	25%
Total Responses	7,348	N/A	N/A

Note: Respondents could mark multiple choices, so numbers do not add up to 100%.

Figure 8-3 Geographic Distribution by ZIP Code of Survey Respondents who Identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color



Note: Darker colors indicate ZIP codes with higher concentrations of respondents who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.

8.5 Responses by Mode of Transportation

Respondents were asked to share their top two primary modes of transportation in the Portland Metro Area. A total of 12,114 respondents (approximately 100% of all survey takers) shared their primary mode of transportation.

Table 8-5 Common Mode of Transportation for Survey Respondents in the Portland Metro Area

Travel Mode	Count of Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents ³
Single-Occupancy Vehicle	9,891	82%
Carpool/Vanpool	4,043	33%
Bike + Roll	1,149	10%
Public Transit	1,068	9%
Walk	817	1%
Freight/Delivery Operator	419	7%
Rideshare Service	311	1%
Paratransit (TriMet LIFT, etc.)	66	3%
None of the above	97	1%

Note: Respondents could mark up to two answers, so responses do not add up to 100%.

8.6 Responses by Use of I-5 and I-205

Respondents were asked to share how often they use I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan area. A total of 12,028 respondents (approximately 99% of all survey takers) shared their travel behavior.

Table 8-6 Use of I-5/I-205 in the Portland Metropolitan Area for Survey Respondents

How Often	Count of Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents
Daily	3,726	31%
3 to 4 times per week	2,974	25%
1 to 2 times per week	2,762	23%
Less than 1 time per week	2,478	22%
Never	131	1%
Total Responses	12,071	100%

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

9 Survey: Multiple Choice Results

This section includes quantitative results from the surveys. We conducted a cross tabulation to determine whether results varied by geography, income, disability, or race/ethnicity. In general, we noted very few differences. Any notable differences are called out below each overall chart.

9.1 Overall Sentiment

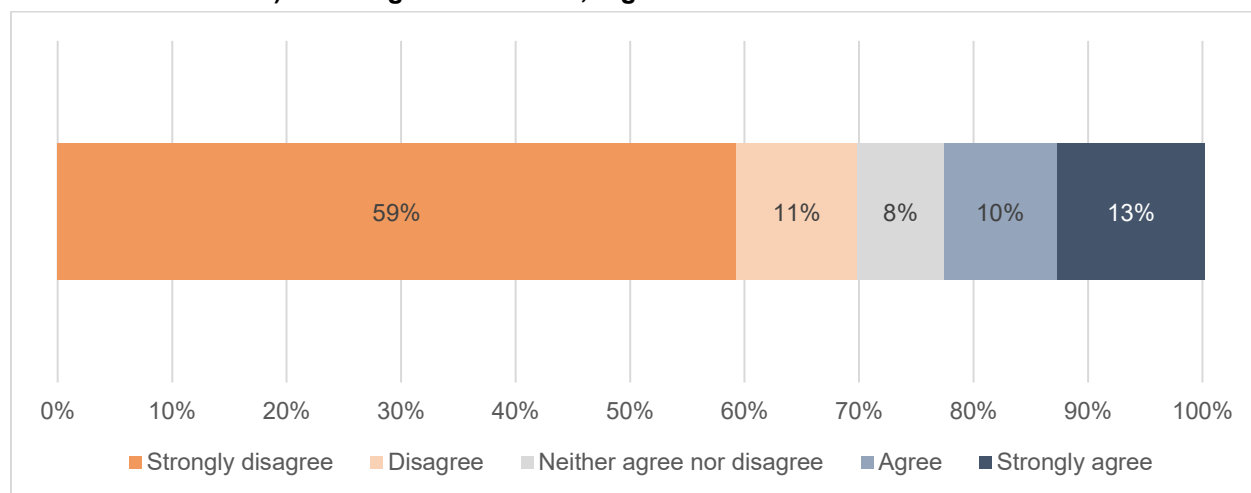
Many commenters who participated in the survey expressed opposition to tolling. This sentiment was exhibited in all demographic groups and is illustrated by the 70% of respondents who expressed disagreement with having a minimum toll for any use of the highways and 66% of respondents who disagreed with having a slightly higher toll rate to generate revenue for community-identified improvements. Many survey respondents also used the write-in comment box at the end to explicitly state their opposition to tolling. Many commenters simply made statements in opposition to tolling, such as “No tolls!” while others provided additional information on the rationale for their opposition. Some commenters noted they would support tolling only on new infrastructure, such as a new bridge or added lane, as a mechanism for paying for that new infrastructure.

This report seeks to provide decision-makers and the public with a summary of comments received so that the Regional Mobility Pricing Project analysis and design can address concerns and opportunities raised as it moves toward the NEPA process and develops a low-income toll discount or credit program.

9.2 Setting a Toll Minimum

Overall, respondents were strongly opposed to setting a minimum fee, with 70% of respondents marking that they either *strongly disagree* or *disagree* with a toll minimum, compared to 23% marking that they *strongly agree* or *agree*. Many of the respondents (59%) marked that they *strongly disagree* with setting a minimum toll fee.

Figure 9-1 How much do you agree or disagree with setting a minimum fee (for example, 50 cents) for using 1-5 and 1-205, regardless of the distance traveled?



Note: Total number of respondents = 11,671

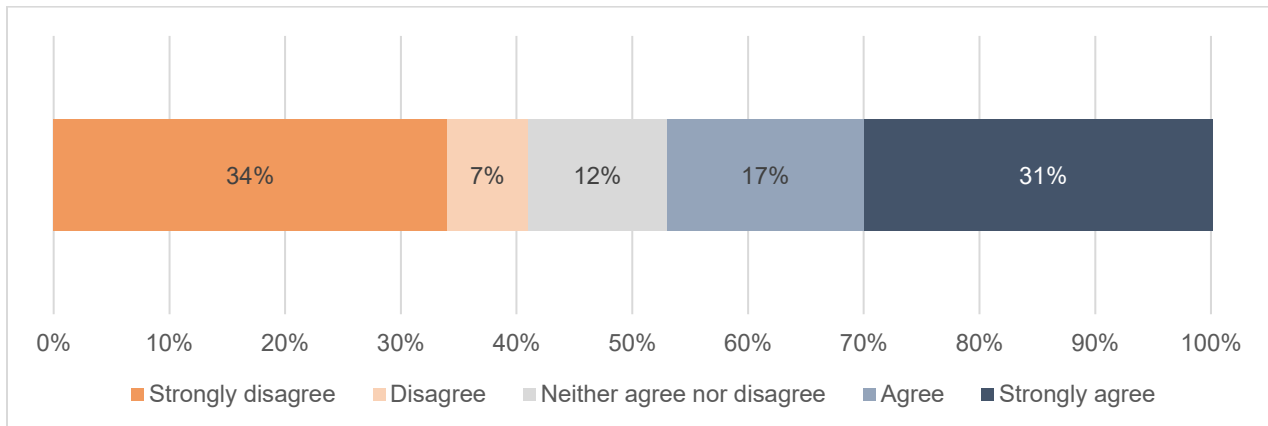
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

- Several groups expressed stronger disagreement with a toll minimum as compared to all survey respondents. For respondents who identify as daily I-5/I-205 users, freight/delivery drivers; Black/African American; American Indian; and Clackamas County residents, at least 80% marked *disagree* and 70% marked *strongly disagree*.
- Many respondents who bike/roll agreed with setting a minimum fee, with 44% marking *strongly agree* and 18% marking *agree*.

9.3 Setting a Toll Maximum

More respondents agreed with setting a daily or monthly maximum toll though responses were highly polarized. Overall, 48% of respondents marked that they *strongly agree* or *agree* with a setting a toll maximum, compared to 40% of respondents marking *strongly disagree* or *disagree*. Notably, in some discussion groups and in a few of the write-in responses, several participants misinterpreted a toll cap as a limit on the total number of trips that a person would be able to take and expressed concern about limiting mobility this way. It is possible that this misunderstanding contributed to the number of respondents who marked *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.

Figure 9-2 How much do you agree or disagree with setting a daily or monthly maximum toll?



Note: Total number of respondents = 11,671

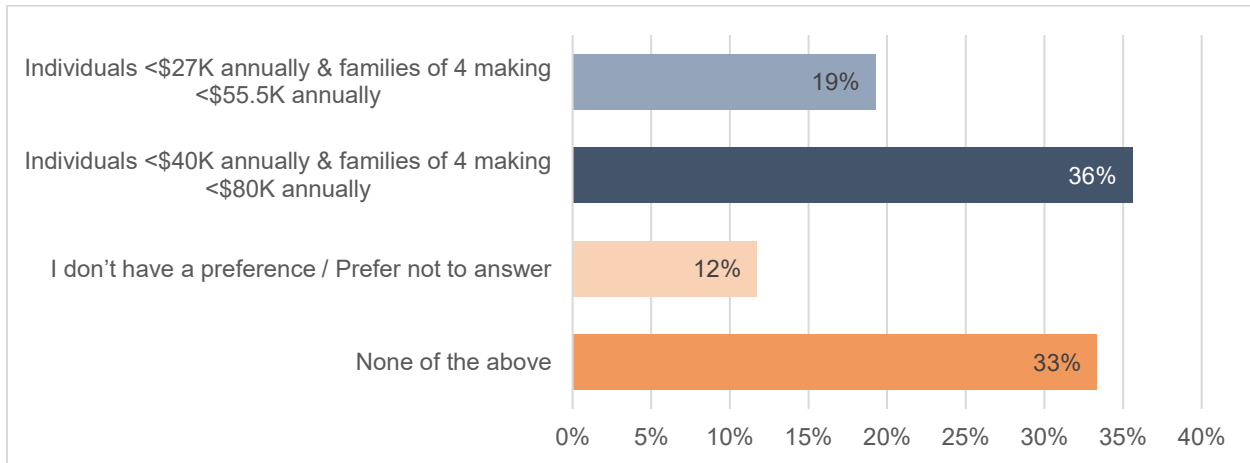
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

- The strongest opposition (52% of total respondents) was from freight/delivery drivers, who disagreed with a maximum toll.

9.4 Eligibility for a Low-income Program

When asked about eligibility for a low-income discount or credit, many respondents (55%) preferred some type of eligibility threshold, while 33% of respondents marked *none of the above*. The most frequently selected preference (36%) was eligibility for individuals making up to \$40,000 annually and families of four making up to \$80,000 annually. Another 19% of respondents preferred eligibility for individuals making up to \$27,000 annually and families of four making up to \$55,500 annually. Across nearly all demographics, there was significantly more preference for eligibility for individuals making up to \$40,000 annually and families of four making up to \$80,000 annually.

Figure 9-3 Who should be eligible for the low-income discount or credit?



Note: Total number of respondents = 11,050

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

- Several groups were more likely to choose one of the presented eligibility thresholds. Among those that bike/roll, walk, take transit, and people with household incomes under \$50,000, at least 70% chose to select one of the eligibility thresholds.
- Several groups were more likely to prefer none of the presented options for a low-income discount. Among those who identify as daily I-5 or I-205 users, Black/African American, American Indian, and people from Clackamas County, at least 40% chose *none of the above*.

9.5 Discount and Credit Options for a Low-income Program

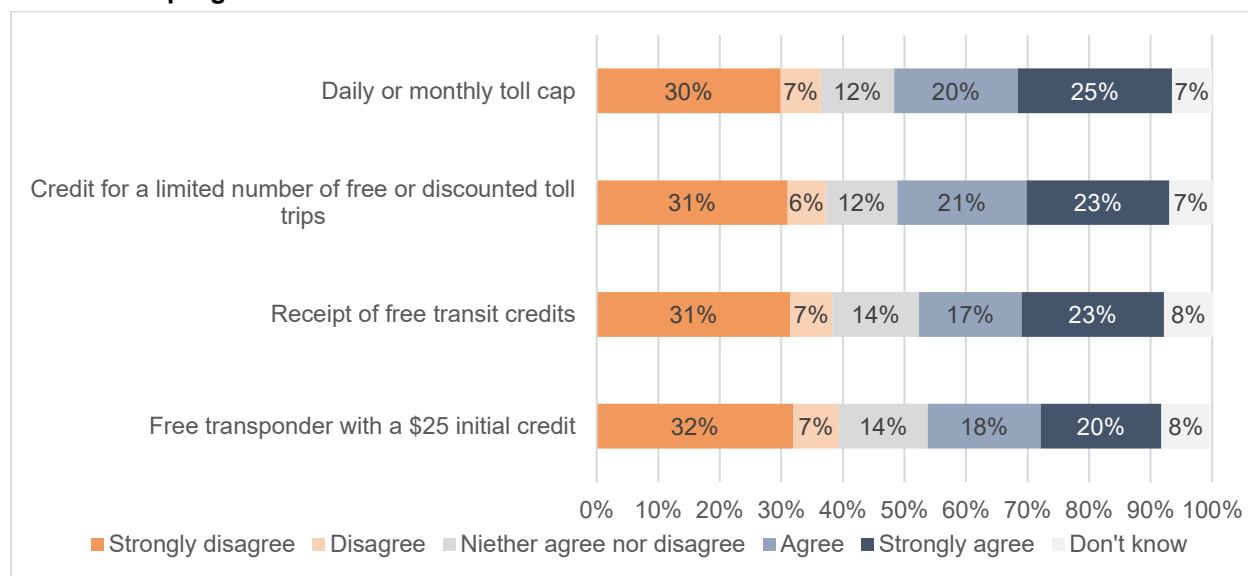
When asked about a set of options for a low-income toll program, respondents were polarized with significant agreement and disagreement on each of the listed options. Overall agreement (combined respondents who marked either *strongly agree* or *agree*) for each option was as follows:

- Daily or monthly toll cap (45%)
- Credit for a limited number of free or discounted toll trips (44%)
- Receipt of free transit credits (40%)
- Free transponder with a \$25 initial credit (38%)

Only one option, free transponders with a \$25 initial credit, received more overall disagreement (39%) than agreement (38%). Respondents who disagreed with the options were more likely to mark *strongly disagree* than *disagree*.

As discussed below, these results vary somewhat from the discussion group responses related to this question. While a daily or monthly toll cap was a popular discount option for the discussion groups, similar to the survey respondents, *credits for a limited number of free or discounted toll trips* was the least preferred option among discussion group participants. See Section 11.3 for more details.

Figure 9-4 How much do you agree or disagree with the following options for a low-income toll program?



Note: Total number of respondents = 10,914 to 10,964. Respondents did not have to mark an answer for each of the different options.

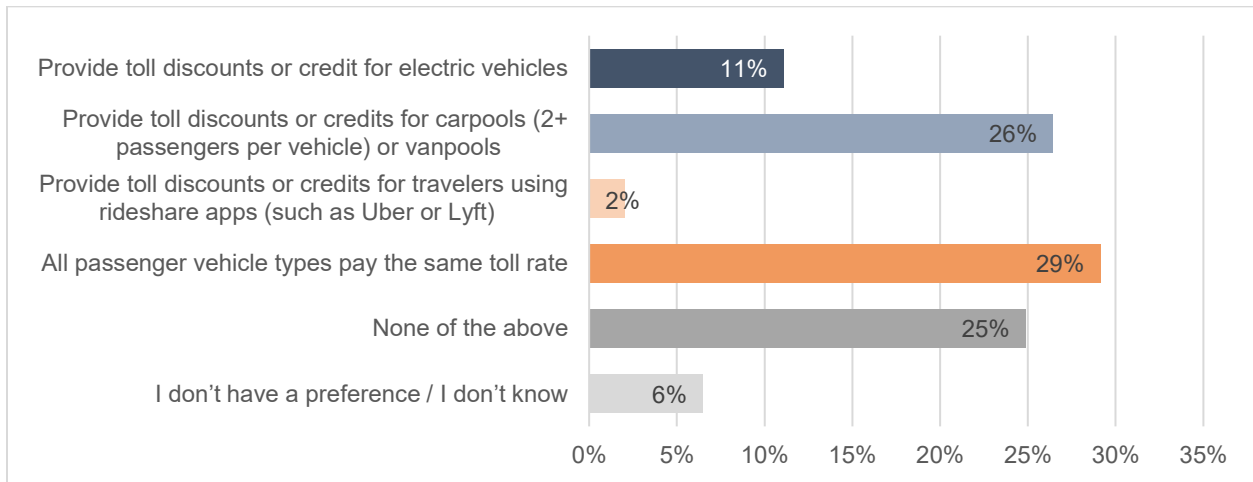
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

- Respondents with low incomes agreed with all options more frequently.
- Respondents with low incomes and respondents who identify as living with a disability agreed with transit credits relatively less frequently. For these groups, transit credits garnered the least support compared to the other options.
- Respondents residing in Multnomah County and respondents who walk, bike/roll, and use transit agreed with all options comparatively more frequently and agreed with transit credits relatively more frequently. For these groups, transit credits garnered the most agreement compared to the other options.
- Respondents residing in Clackamas County, respondents who identify as freight/delivery drivers, and respondents who identify as Black/African American agreed with all options less frequently.

9.6 Discount or Credits for Other Vehicle Types

Overall, respondents did not indicate support for providing discounts or credits to other vehicle types. When asked about potential discounts for vehicle types, many respondents marked either *all passenger vehicle types pay the same toll rate* (29%) or *none of the above* (25%). Of the vehicle type options, significantly more respondents preferred discounts or credits for carpool vehicles (26%) compared to electric vehicles (11%) or rideshares (2%).

Figure 9-5 Which additional vehicle type do you prefer most to potentially receive a toll discount or credit? (Select one)



Note: Total number of respondents = 11,048

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

- Respondents who carpool, bike/roll, use transit, and identify as Asian chose carpool/vanpool discounts more frequently than other groups.
- Respondents with household incomes over \$100,000 as well as respondents who walk, bike/roll, or use transit chose discounts for electric vehicles more frequently.
- Freight/delivery drivers were the most opposed to additional credits with 36% marking *All passenger vehicle types pay the same* and 43% marking *None of the above*.
- Respondents who use rideshare chose discounts for rideshares comparatively more frequently.

9.7 Use of Toll Revenue

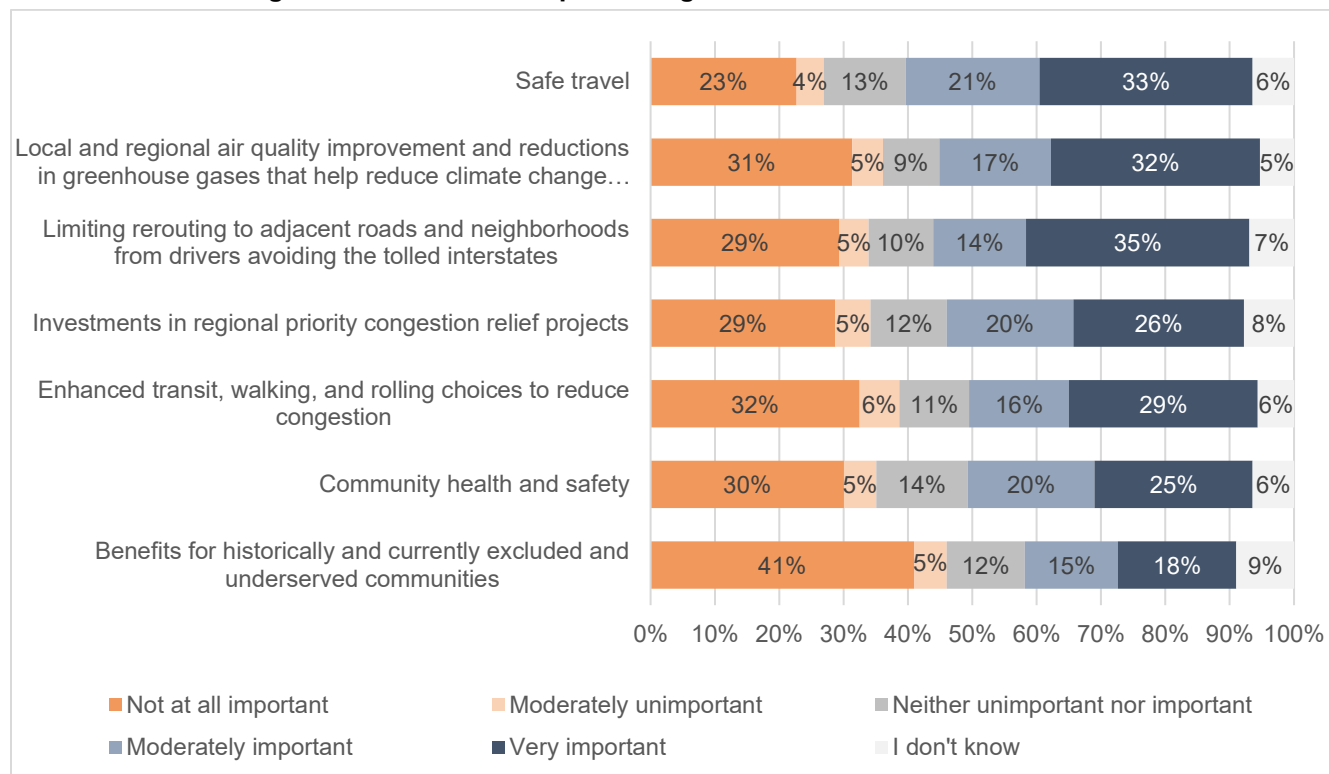
When asked about use of toll revenues, safe travel was considered the most important. This was true across nearly all demographic groups. Overall importance (combined respondents who marked either *important* or *strongly important*) for each option was as follows:

- Safe travel (54%)
- Local and regional air quality improvement and reductions in greenhouse gases that help reduce climate change effects (50%)
- Limiting rerouting to adjacent roads and neighborhoods from drivers avoiding the tolled interstates (49%)
- Investments in regional priority congestion relief projects (46%)
- Enhanced transit, walking, and rolling choices to reduce congestion (45%)
- Community health and safety (44%)
- Benefits for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities (33%)

These responses align with previous engagement efforts, including the I-205 Toll Project’s [Summer-Fall 2020 engagement Summary](#), in which many respondents expressed concern about safety and air quality issues due to tolling. In the Regional Mobility Pricing Project’s [Summer 2021 Engagement Report](#),

respondents expressed notable concern about climate change, though in previous surveys in 2018 and 2020, climate change concerns were not frequently mentioned.

Figure 9-6 How important do you think it is that congestion pricing revenue contributes to the following in the Portland metropolitan region?



Note: Total number of respondents = 10,408 to 10,514. Respondents did not have to mark an answer for each of the different options.

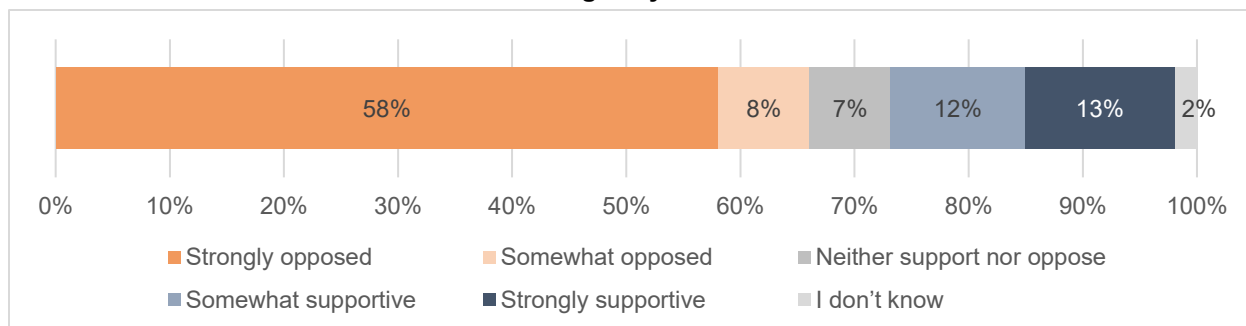
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

- Respondents who bike/roll, walk, and use transit, as well as people from Multnomah County marked air quality improvements and greenhouse gas reductions (66% to 84%) and transit, walking, and rolling investments (61% to 86%) as important comparatively more frequently.
- Daily I-5 and I-205 users as well as freight/delivery drivers marked all options as *important* or *very important* comparatively less frequently.

9.8 Higher Tolls for Community-identified Priorities

Respondents were generally not supportive of paying higher tolls to support community-identified priorities, such as improved sidewalks or transit facilities near the tolled highways. Overall, 66% of respondents did not agree with this suggestion, with 58% marking *strongly disagree*.

Figure 9-7 How supportive would you be of a slightly higher toll rate if it meant increased investments for community-identified priorities, such as improved sidewalks or transit facilities near the tolled highways?



Note: Total number of respondents = 10,458

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

- Several groups were more likely to agree with paying higher tolls for community-identified priorities (marked either *agree* or *strongly agree*). These included respondents who bike/roll (71%) and respondents who use transit (56%). About half of respondents who walk (50%) agreed.
- Respondents who identify as daily I-5 or I-205 users, freight/delivery drivers, Black/African America, American Indian, and reside in Clackamas County were opposed more frequently than other groups with 72% to 81% marking *strongly opposed*.

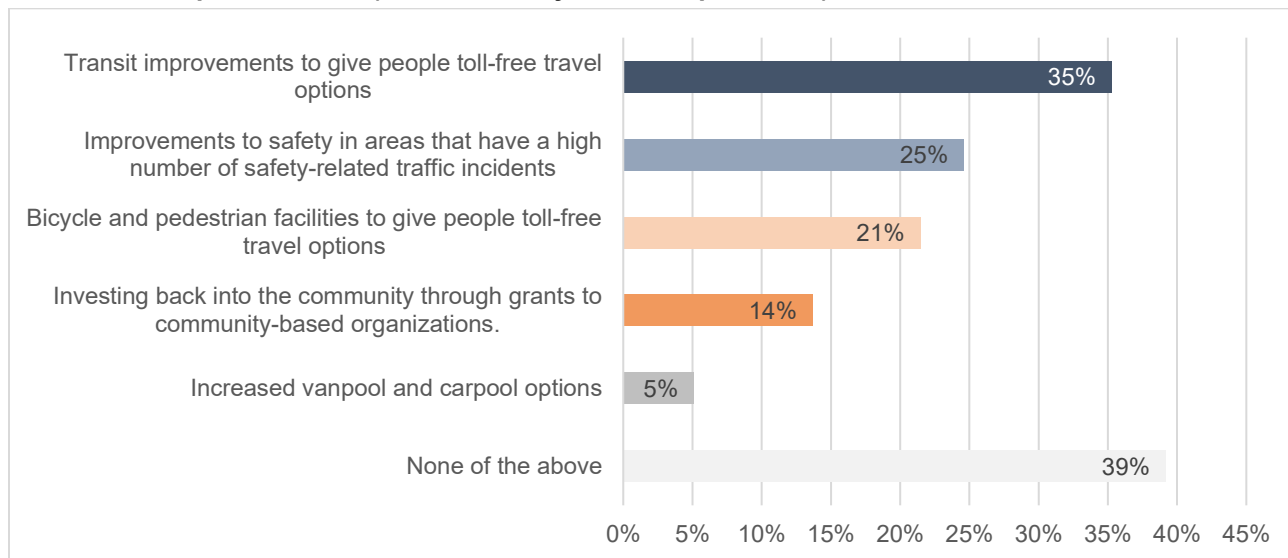
9.9 Toll Revenue for Non-Highway Uses

Many people indicated that they did not want toll revenues going toward non-highway improvements. When asked to identify up to two different options for spending toll revenue on non-highway improvements, the most frequent response was *none of the above* (39%). The overall percentage of people that chose each of the options was as follows:

- None of the above (39%)
- Transit improvements to give people toll-free travel options (35%)
- Improvements to safety in areas that have a high number of safety-related traffic incidents (25%)
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities to give people toll-free travel options (21%)
- Investing back into the community through grants to CBOs (14%)
- Increased vanpool and carpool options (5%)

This aligns with the write-in comments and results of previous engagement efforts, in which some respondents noted that they are more open to tolls for using, and paying for, new highway infrastructure, such as a new bridge or an added lane, compared to paying tolls on existing roadways.

Figure 9-8 What is your preference on how to allocate tolling revenues for non-highway improvements? (Please select your two top choices)



Note: Total number of respondents = 10,562

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

- Respondents with household incomes under \$50,000 chose grants to CBOs more frequently (20%), with more respondents choosing it over bike and pedestrian investments, but still less than transit or safety improvements.
- Respondents who bike/roll, walk, and use transit were more likely to prefer use of toll revenues for transit improvements and for bike and walk improvements.
- Respondents who identify as daily I-5 or I-205 users, freight/delivery drivers, Black/African American, American Indian and Clackamas County residents, were more likely to mark *none of the above*.

10 Survey: Write-in Comments and Public Comment Results

This section includes a summary of key themes from the 8,316 survey comments responding to survey Question 14: “What one thing would you like decision-makers and project planner to know or consider about congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205?” Also included are 109 public comments received between April 6, 2022, and May 27, 2022, via email, web comment form, and voicemail.

For purposes of indicating the frequency of key themes and messages we used the terms “many,” “several,” “some,” and “few.”⁴

Table 10-1 provides a list of the comment category codes and the number of times a comment submittal referenced one of the applicable comment codes. Each comment submittal could have more than one idea. Each idea was categorized individually as a comment.

10.1 Overall Comment Numbers

Table 10-1 Count of Comments by Topic⁵

Topic	Number of Comments
Revenue and Taxes	2,080
Fairness	1,540
Tolling Implementation	1,250
Rerouting and Diversion	940
Trust and Accountability	910
Multimodal Transportation	900
Equity	620
Expanding Capacity	520
Personal Financial Impacts	350
Purpose and Need	350
Congestion Observations and Impacts	340
Decision-making Process and Public Engagement	340
Economic Impacts	240
Other Congestion Management Ideas	230
Safety	230
Environmental Impacts	200
Project Scope and Goals	180
Other Examples of Tolling	160
Proposed Alternatives	140
Other Concurrent Projects	130
Freight	60

⁴ Many” is used to indicate that a theme was expressed in more than 50% of the comments within a topic area, “several” indicates approximately 30% to 50%, “some” indicates approximately 10% to 30%, and “few” means it was mentioned more than once in up to approximately 10% of comments.

⁵ Each comment could be tagged with multiple topic codes.

10.2 Revenue and Taxes

About 2,080 comments addressed generation and use of government revenue and taxes. Comments categorized under “revenue and taxes” include suggestions or preferences about how revenue generated through tolling will be spent, concerns, questions, or a need for more information about how current tax revenue is being used to pay for roadways in Oregon, and suggestions or preferences for other methods of generating revenue for roadway improvements.

Overall, many respondents commented that current taxes are too high and a toll would be another form of tax imposed on them. In addition, many respondents were not aware that existing revenue from vehicle fees and taxes is insufficient to fund needed transportation improvements. They also expressed concern that and questions about how the State of Oregon spends existing tax revenue. There were diverging opinions on how future toll revenue should be used to fund transportation projects, with some respondents desiring revenue to go toward projects to improve travel for vehicles and other respondents desiring revenue to go toward transit, biking, and walking investments.

There were various suggestions for different ways to get revenue to fund transportation improvements other than implementing tolls on I-205 and I-5, including raising existing taxes and fees, implementing new taxes, and allocating revenue from existing state and federal funding sources.

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to revenue and taxes.

10.2.1 Current Taxes and Expenditure of Existing Revenue

- Many respondents expressed concern that they are already paying too many taxes and see a toll as another tax.
- Several respondents said that the existing revenue from taxes and vehicle-registration fees is sufficient to fund transportation improvements, but the funding is being ineffectively used or allocated to the wrong projects.
- Some respondents said certain user groups—such as freight-trucking industries or out-of-state commuters—should pay more in taxes.

10.2.2 Expenditure of Future Toll Revenue

- Many respondents said toll revenue should be used only for highway and roadway improvements for vehicles, including expanding highways and roadways, and maintaining and repairing existing highways and roadways.
- Several respondents said toll revenue should be used only to improve pedestrian, bike, and transit opportunities.

COMMENTS ABOUT REVENUE AND TAXES

“We already paid for the freeways, and you tax us more than enough to pay for maintenance and improvements.”

“Revenue should only be allocated for projects alleviating congestion.”

“I would rather see an increase in the gas tax and improvements on all roads as it should be.”

“Revenue use is critical and must be invested in transit, bike, walk and safety improvements to provide people with choices to not drive.”

“Take time to consider how current funds are being used. Asking for more money and then not using it for road maintenance should not be an option with a toll.”

- Some respondents said toll revenue should be used to fund projects only in the I-205 and I-5 corridors and nearby neighborhoods.
- A few respondents said toll revenue should be used to fund projects in the Portland metropolitan area, such as the I-5 Bridge Replacement Program and the Rose Quarter Improvement Project.
- A few respondents expressed concern that toll revenue might be used inappropriately by government officials and/or agencies and that there is a need for transparency and accountability for how revenue is used.
- A few respondents said the toll should be discontinued after sufficient revenue has been generated to fund needed transportation improvements.
- A few respondents said toll revenue should be used to address negative effects of vehicles rerouting from the highway onto local streets.

10.2.3 Suggested Alternate Revenue Source

- Many respondents said that other methods should be used to fund transportation improvements, such as raising existing taxes and fees (e.g., gas, income, property, corporate, vehicle registration), implementing new taxes (e.g., retail sales, carbon emissions, vehicle mileage, electric vehicles), or allocating tax revenue from existing sources (e.g., cigarettes, liquor, and marijuana sales, Oregon lottery).
- Several respondents said that funding for transportation improvements should come from state and federal sources, especially from the recent federal infrastructure bill (i.e., 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act).

10.3 Fairness

About 1,540 comments addressed perceived fairness. Comments summarized under “fairness” related to the existence of viable alternative routes, different impacts based on geographic location, the fairness of user-pay systems, the fairness of paying for established roadways, flexibility of personal schedule and ability to change travel patterns. The concepts of “fairness” and “equity” (see Section 10.8, Equity) are related, but distinct. For this analysis, comments were categorized as relating to “fairness” when they discussed the ethics of value pricing systems and the design of tolling. Comments about “equity,” instead, focuses on whether certain historically excluded and underserved communities will experience disproportionate outcomes and impacts as a result of congestion pricing.

Overall, many respondents were concerned with disproportionate impacts to communities that are more reliant on the interstate network to get around, as well as disproportionate impacts to those that are perceived to have less flexibility in how often and when they use I-5 and I-205. Many respondents also said that it was unfair to pay for roadways that they said they were already paying for through other taxes.

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to fairness.

COMMENTS ABOUT FAIRNESS

“Tolling disproportionately affects the lower middle class who do not have control over their work schedules. We just barely do not qualify as low income and have to live outside the city where cost of living is lower.”

“We are already paying for the roads through our taxes and should not be taxed further for the use of them!”

“With the current rising inflation, be very mindful of the economic impact tolling will have on families of the commuters that you are expecting to pay this toll.”

10.3.1 Unfair Impacts

- Many respondents expressed concern that certain geographic communities—particularly West Linn, Oregon City, Clackamas County, Hayden Island, and East Portland— would face greater impacts.
- Many respondents expressed concern that tolls would unfairly burden those who have little to no flexibility in where or when they need to travel, or who have limited or no access to other routes or transit.
- Several respondents noted other issues, such as rising housing costs, affecting affordability in the region and expressed concern that tolls would exacerbate affordability issues.
- Several respondents expressed concern that tolls would disproportionately affect residents of one state, although there were differing opinions over whether Washington State residents or Oregon residents would be more unfairly impacted.
- Some respondents said that all users should pay the same toll rate, and that discounts or other credits would be unfair.
- Some respondents said that tolls are a regressive form of taxation that would mostly affect the working class and middle class, and that the benefits of tolling—such as reduced travel times and investment in road improvements—would be unfairly distributed to those with higher incomes.
- A few respondents supported tolls and said that it is fair that the amount someone pays for the maintenance of a roadway be proportional to how often they use it.
- A few respondents said they would be willing to pay tolls on new infrastructure but not on existing infrastructure.

10.3.2 Roads are Already Paid for and Should be Free

- Many respondents said that the roads have already been paid for or are currently being paid for through existing taxes.
- A few respondents said that the “free” in “freeways” means the roads should be free of tolls.
- A few respondents said that certain trip types should be free, such as getting to/from medical appointments, school, social services, or childcare.

10.4 Tolling Implementation

About 1,250 comments addressed tolling implementation. Comments summarized under “tolling implementation” include toll rates and schedule, and technology (scan methods, or the utilization of technologies to charge and track road usage). Topics also include how out-of-state travelers will be impacted by tolls, and general logistics.

Overall, the responses indicated differing opinions on the logistics of tolling implementation. Comments about the cost of tolls generally indicated support for lower toll rates; however, some comments supported charging higher tolls to improve roadway capacity and to reduce vehicle-miles

traveled. The comments also indicated differing opinions about whether there should be a single rate paid by all users or variable rates that fluctuate with traffic conditions and discounts or credits for certain populations. Respondents also had opinions on discounts and credits, with respondents both in favor of

COMMENTS ABOUT TOLLING IMPLEMENTATION

“Every day I see many vehicles without license plates. You need to enforce basic vehicle registration requirements.”

“Keep in mind that electric/low emission discounts would only benefit those that can afford these types of cars. Typically not low income.”

and against providing discounts to certain groups, including frequent users, electric vehicles, transit, and freight trucks.

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to implementation.

10.4.1 Rates and Cost of Tolls

- Many respondents said that the application of tolls should be different for in-state and out-of-state (e.g., Washington State) drivers. Some respondents said that out-of-state drivers should pay more while other respondents said that Oregon residents should pay more. Some respondents said that Oregon residents would be disproportionately affected by tolls while some respondents said that Oregon residents would disproportionately benefit from tolls.
- Some respondents supported having higher toll rates during the most congested times of the day.
- Some respondents said that there should be a single toll rate that does not change throughout the day.
- Some respondents said the toll rate should vary by lane, where users could choose to pay a higher fee to move faster.
- A few respondents offered suggestions for determining toll rates, including establishing a maximum monthly charge, adjusting rates based on the season, exemptions for holidays, or suggestions for an exact fee (e.g., \$1 per day).

10.4.2 Implementation and Operation

- Many respondents expressed concern over how tolls would be enforced, particularly on vehicles without transponders or without a visible license plate.
- Some respondents expressed concern about the timing of implementation, noting that the implementation of tolling is poorly timed given the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation rates, and other economic hardships.
- Some respondents said that the spacing of collection points is important.
- Some respondents said that tolls should be only on some lanes, such as “express lanes” or high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes instead of tolling all lanes.
- Some respondents said tolls should be only in one direction (e.g., southbound lanes).
- A few comments were asking whether tolls would be collected two (or more) times if a vehicle passed through more than one toll area on the same day.
- A few respondents said that tolling should be implemented as quickly as possible.
- A few respondents said that the toll system should be simple and streamlined in order to reduce the amount of toll revenue needed for administration or enforcement.
- A few respondents said that the price of tolls should change over time, such as starting with a lower toll and then gradually increasing as users become acclimated to the new tolling system.

10.4.3 Discounts and Credits

(See also Section 10.8, Equity)

- Many respondents said that local residents and/or other frequent users should receive a full exemption or a discount, such as a cap on daily or monthly fees.

- Some respondents said that all users should pay the same amount and that there should not be discounts or credits.
- Some respondents said that all Oregon residents should receive a discount, with a higher toll charged to out-of-state drivers.
- Some respondents said there should be variable prices for drivers based on a number of factors, including distance traveled, type of vehicle (like motorcycles or freight trucks), and their location of residence (Oregon resident, out-of-state, etc.).
- A few respondents said that there should be discounts or exemptions for various essential workers, such as healthcare workers, school staff, servicemembers, and emergency vehicles.
- A few said that there should not be discounts for electric vehicles, noting that they affect the roads and use the same amount of space as standard vehicles.
- A few respondents said that other specific groups should receive discounts or credits (including a credit for prepaying for tolls or purchasing a transponder) or there should be a discount for seniors, people with disabilities, students, and unemployed persons.
- A few respondents said that motorcycles should get discounts.
- A few respondents said there should be monthly or daily caps on the number of tolls, or amount of toll revenue, that could be collected per individual.

10.4.4 Time-related Tolling Policy

- Some respondents said that tolls should end after toll-revenue funded projects are complete.
- A few respondents said that tolling on I-205 and I-5 should begin at the same time and not separately.
- A few respondents said that tolling should have started in the Portland metropolitan area years ago.

10.4.5 Other Tolling Policy

- A few respondents said there should be traffic demand management policies, including reducing single-occupancy vehicle dependency, encouraging more transit use overall, and promoting carpooling.
- A few respondents said there should be a responsive equity approach. This included evaluating whether future toll revenue is disproportionately raised by low-income populations or people of color, reassessing subsidies and credits over time, and ensuring that low-income programs are not needlessly complicated.
- A few respondents said there should be collaboration between agencies, such as TriMet and ODOT.
- A few respondents said that tolling assumptions should be part of the analysis for other projects and the effectiveness of tolling should be assessed over time.

10.5 Rerouting and diversion

About 940 comments addressed rerouting and diversion. Comments summarized under “rerouting/diversion” cover the topic of traffic and congestion being pushed or rerouted to side streets as people try to avoid congestion or tolls. The comments were divided into “general impacts of diversion,” which include general concerns about rerouting into communities near I-5 and I-205, and “impacts of diversion at specific locations” where rerouting or diversion into specific areas was described as a concern.

Overall, respondents were especially concerned with rerouting into local communities near the I-205 Toll Project area. Many respondents expressed concern that people living near the highways will experience a higher rate of traffic accidents as vehicles flock to local roads and that diversion will increase existing congestion on side streets causing higher rates of fuel consumption and greenhouse gases. These concerns were likely more pronounced since the traffic and mitigation analyses are underway and results are not yet available.

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to rerouting and diversion.

COMMENTS ABOUT REROUTING AND DIVERSION

“People will reroute through my neighborhood. I am concerned for the safety of the kids playing as more cars will be cutting through.”

“Your approach lacks imagination and will increase carbon emissions as more idling and driving will occur in neighborhoods.”

“Traffic on Ek Rd, Borland Rd, Johnson Rd, and Willamette Falls Dr will increase when you toll I-205 making these roads less safe for our families and for biking.”

10.5.1 General Impacts of Diversion

- Several respondents expressed concern that diversion would increase as tolling is implemented, especially in areas near the I-205 Toll Project area such as West Linn and Oregon City.
- Some respondents expressed concern that rerouting would increase speeding or the frequency of accidents and injuries on side streets, especially for bicyclists, pedestrians, and children near schools.
- Some respondents expressed concern that diversion would increase the time spent commuting, with several concerned that this would contribute to increased fuel consumption and emissions.
- A few respondents expressed concern that the increased number of vehicles on side roads would increase road wear and put more pressure on local jurisdictions to improve their roadways.

10.5.2 Impacts of Diversion at Specific Locations

- Many respondents expressed concern that areas in the southeast metropolitan area in Clackamas County would experience the most diversion, with some noting that alternative routes are already congested and the congestion will grow once tolling is implemented.
- Common routes called out in the region would experience rerouting and more local congestion included:
 - Oregon City Arch Bridge
 - Willamette Falls Drive (OR 43)
 - McLoughlin Boulevard (99E)
 - Powell Boulevard (US 26)
 - SE Division Street

- SE 82nd Avenue
- SE 92nd Avenue
- Borland Road
- Stafford Road
- Barbur Boulevard
- Martin Luther King Boulevard (99E)
- Interstate Avenue

10.6 Trust and accountability

About 910 comments addressed trust and accountability. Comments summarized included trust in ODOT or government more broadly, and questions regarding whether tolling is legal.

Overall, many respondents expressed concern and mistrust about how tolling revenues would be used, mistrust in the government and politicians more broadly, and skepticism about tolling being the appropriate toll for reducing congestion.

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to trust and accountability.

10.6.1 Trust in the Government

- Many respondents expressed concern that the government and ODOT do not spend funds efficiently or effectively. They noted that current mismanagement of public funds, particularly road and gas tax funding, results in concern that future revenues would also be mismanaged.
- Several respondents said they believe tolling is a way for the government to get more money from residents through unfair means, or for use on pet or illegitimate projects.
- Several respondents expressed doubt that tolling would actually achieve the goal of congestion reduction.
- Some respondents expressed concern that tolling would lead to significant rerouting elsewhere.
- A few respondents said that transit investment, and not tolling, is what is needed to achieve the goal of congestion relief.
- A few respondents expressed concern that tolling would lead to a greater burden on already marginalized groups.
- Some respondents expressed a lack of trust or faith in elected officials or agency leadership to implement tolling. They pointed to past planning decisions as the reason congestion and other transportation problems exists and had concerns about these decision-makers and agency staff implementing tolling.
- Some respondents said they do not believe that ODOT and decision-makers are listening to the public or do not have an interest in responding to public comments. A few of these noted that other societal problems are more important to focus on.

COMMENTS ABOUT TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

“Use the money already taxed for these purposes. Mismanagement of money is the issue and tolling won’t fix it.”

“This will do nothing to alleviate congestion. All money from the project will be misspent anyway.”

“I’ve lived through several toll implementations in various cities. There needs to be a proper oversight body on the proper usage of funds, proper transparency, and frequent opportunities for public feedback.”

- A few respondents said that tolling revenues should be spent in a transparent way, with reporting of how funds are used. They pointed to a need for oversight and transparency in how the toll rates are determined.

10.6.2 Tolling Authorization

- Some respondents had questions about the legality of tolling or referenced a public vote related to tolling. They asserted that they or others have voted against tolling in the past, and others advocated for a vote on tolling to take place before it can begin.
- Some respondents questioned whether tolling can be legitimately implemented on highways that were already paid for through public funds and taxes.
- A few respondents expressed concern about invasion of privacy and tracking via transponders and said that tolling gives too much control to one agency of government.

10.7 Multimodal Transportation

About 900 comments addressed multimodal transportation, which includes transit options and/or funding for transit, pedestrians and cyclists, and walking and biking infrastructure.

Overall, many respondents noted the inadequacies of the existing transit, bicycle, and pedestrian systems in the Portland metropolitan area and the importance of improving those systems as a way of reducing traffic congestion. Respondents were mixed on their support for tolling, but many respondents requested that the region expand public transportation. Some respondents also said that tolling should not be implemented unless transit access is improved in areas most affected by tolling. Overall, respondents shared that residents should have access to increased safe and reliable transportation options. Some respondents also shared that they do not see active transportation as a viable alternative to driving on the highway due to location, occupation, or travel times.

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to multimodal transportation.

10.7.1 Transit

- Many respondents requested that the region expand public transportation. Respondents shared a particular interest for increasing access, frequency, and connectivity of public transportation.
- Several respondents wrote that public transit is not a viable alternative mode of transportation due to location, occupation, hours of service, or travel times. Respondents noted the particular lack of public transportation adjacent to the I-205 corridor and concluded that the toll proposal was unfair.
- Some respondents said that public transportation should be expanded before tolls are implemented and expressed concern that tolling would move forward without a viable alternative to paying the toll.

COMMENTS ABOUT MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

"I have to drive to work here every day. There are no good transit options (15 minutes vs 2 hours). Please consider how you are penalizing people that have no other viable options."

"There is currently not an efficient transit option along I-205."

"Congestion pricing should fund improvements to public transit and bike infrastructure."

- Some respondents said that it will be important to incentivize use and increase access to transportation options for residents at all income levels in the region. Respondents noted a particular interest in prioritizing toll revenue for increasing access to transportation options.
- Some respondents said that public transit feels unsafe.
- A few respondents said that transit is not a cost-effective investment or said they do not support expanding public transportation.
- A few respondents said that they do not want the government to dictate their transportation behavior.
- A few respondents said that transit should be free.
- A few respondents said that tolling would not encourage meaningful mode shift to active transportation.
- A few respondents requested that ODOT increase engagement with the elderly and disabled community and noted barriers to those communities using active modes of transportation.

10.7.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel

- Several respondents requested that the region improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation infrastructure to improve access to or encourage biking or walking.
- A few respondents noted that some current bicycle and pedestrian paths near the highway are challenging to maneuver due to houseless encampments.
- A few respondents opposed building more bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Respondents said that biking and walking is not a safe or effective alternative to using the tolled system.
- A few respondents expressed concern that rerouting would make biking and walking less safe in their neighborhood.
- A few respondents said that biking and walking was not a viable transportation option in their area.
- A few respondents said that cyclists should be charged for their use of infrastructure.

10.8 Equity

About 620 comments addressed disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations that have been historically disenfranchised (low income, communities of color, people with disabilities, elderly, immigrants). (See also *Section 10.3 for related comments categorized under “fairness.”*)

Overall, many respondents identified a variety of different groups they said would be disproportionately impacted by a tolling program. Respondents also shared mixed opinions overall about equity’s role in a tolling program, as well as suggestions for how to use toll revenues to address equity.

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to equity.

10.8.1 Adversely Affected Groups and Populations

- Many respondents expressed concern that tolling would disproportionately negatively affect certain groups or populations. The following groups/populations were mentioned multiple times:
 - Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color
 - Essential workers, especially healthcare providers
 - People with disabilities or who are immunocompromised
 - People experiencing houselessness
 - People experiencing low incomes
 - People who are car-dependent or live in areas that lack transit
 - Senior citizens and older people
 - Small business owners and employees
 - Students
- Some respondents expressed concern about the limited travel options for people experiencing low incomes, including poor transit service or multimodal infrastructure, long distances between housing and jobs because of affordability, and inflexibility with both schedules (such as shift work) and destinations.
- Some respondents said that tolling feels like a regressive tax on the poor.
- Some respondents noted that the cost of living in Portland—including housing, transport, childcare, and food costs are already high—and expressed concern that tolling will increase the cost of living, making essential travel untenable for people experiencing low incomes.

Comments about trust and accountability

“Tolling will disproportionately and adversely impact communities already restricted in mobility due to race, socioeconomic class, or other marginalized identities and who must work across the river to survive.”

“Black and brown neighborhoods were destroyed to create these freeways in the first place. If this project doesn’t directly address that violence through reparative measures, this whole engagement process will be adding to that legacy.”

“We must provide for lower-income people who still need a car. Relegating them to busses/train presumes their time is less valuable than that of us who can afford tolls easily.”

10.8.2 Equitable Benefits

- Several respondents stated support for tolls as a way to promote equity by managing congestion, helping shift travel from single-passenger vehicles to transit, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- Some respondents said that it was important for the tolling program to provide benefits that were distributed equitably. Benefits mentioned included the following:
 - Reinvesting toll revenue into communities
 - Expanding transit service and bike/pedestrian infrastructure
 - Adopting policies addressing climate change
 - Mitigating the impacts of the history of redlining and urban renewal, and compact urban development

10.8.3 Community Support or Skepticism of Equity

- Some respondents expressed concern that tolls could provide benefits primarily to higher-income people, or people with historic, structural privilege relative to working class and Black, Indigenous, and people of color.
- A few respondents stated overall support for equity in tolling, but did not specify specific impacts, communities or groups, or benefits.
- A few respondents questioned the focus on equity in tolling and suggested that equity was either irrelevant to tolling, or specifically should not be considered while developing toll policies.

10.8.4 Low-Income Toll Discount or Credit Program

- Some respondents supported big discounts and very low-priced tolls for people experiencing low income.
- Some respondents supported exemptions as essential or required for people experiencing low incomes.
- Some respondents said that higher-income earners should be tolled at higher rates or a toll rate structure tiered by income, with a gradual discount scale.
- Some respondents indicated their preferred thresholds or definitions for “low income.” General income thresholds for exemptions, discounts, or credits discussed range from \$27,000 to \$80,000 per year.
- A few respondents expressed concern about the procedural burden that income verification or certification would place on people experiencing low incomes.
- A few respondents said that there should be no exemptions, and that all travelers, including people experiencing low income, should pay at least some amount.
- A few respondents said that credits can be problematic because they require upfront payments.
- A few respondents said that sending transponders in the mail with credits loaded into their account would be more helpful than having travelers apply for credits at the end of the year.
- A few respondents said that there should be maximum daily and monthly limits or caps on the total amount of tolls that could be collected.
- A few respondents said that there should not be a cap on the number of low-income credits or discounts provided to drivers or expressed concern that discounts or credits would only be provided for a capped number of days in a month.
- A few respondents said that the threshold for low-income eligibility should be higher than 300% federal poverty level.

- A few respondents expressed concern that some people may have incomes that just exceed the threshold, and that due to inflation, general cost of living, and rising prices, they cannot truly afford tolls in the same way that high-income earners may be able to.

10.9 Expanding Capacity

About 520 comments addressed expanding capacity. Comments summarized under “expand capacity” cover topics including adding capacity to existing roadways, and constructing new roadways (new bridges, highways, bypasses, etc.)

Overall, many respondents said that they preferred adding highway capacity and/or building additional highways or roads as a method to address congestion compared to, or instead of, implementing tolling. Respondents had mixed opinions on using toll revenues for expanding roadways with some saying that tolling revenues should be used only on roadway expansion, while some said that tolling revenue should explicitly not be used for roadway expansion as part of a larger goal of reducing single-occupancy vehicle use. Many respondents noted that if tolling was anticipated to reduce congestion, it should be implemented prior to any analysis on the need for building additional capacity.

COMMENTS ABOUT EXPANDING CAPACITY

“Tolling is a bad option. Adding infrastructure, such as adding traffic lanes, is the solution.”

“These freeways are already bought and paid for. Tolling should only be used for new lanes or specific improvements only.”

“Do not increase the number of lanes as we know through induced demand that it won’t help reduce traffic.”

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to expanding capacity.

10.9.1 Expanding Existing Roadways

- Many respondents said that lanes should be added to existing highways, particularly I-5 and I-205, as well as other major throughfares.
- Many respondents said that adding highway lanes should be the primary strategy to reduce congestion instead of tolling and that existing revenue streams should be used for this purpose.
- Many respondents said that tolling revenues should only go toward expanding lanes.
- Many respondents said that tolling should only be implemented on new lanes and not on existing lanes.
- Several respondents noted the steady increase in population in the Portland metropolitan area over the last few decades and said the existing roadways should be expanded to accommodate this growth.
- Several respondents said that highway expansion should focus on existing bottlenecks, particularly where major highways come together, such as the Rose Quarter, or in sections where the number of lanes is reduced, such as I-205 between Abernethy Bridge and Stafford Road.
- Some respondents said that they would support additional taxes for expanding roadways instead of implementing a toll.
- Some respondents said a third lane should be added to the section of I-205 between Stafford Road and Oregon City.
- Some respondents said that adding capacity to existing roadways was critical for reducing diversion.

- A few respondents said that the Interstate Bridge from Portland to Vancouver should be widened.
- A few respondents noted that most new cars would be electric and so reducing car use would not be as important for addressing climate issues.

10.9.2 Adding New Roadways

- Many respondents said that adding new roadways should be the primary strategy to reduce congestion instead of tolling and that existing revenue streams should be used for this purpose.
- Many respondents said that tolling revenues should go only to adding new roadway capacity.
- Many respondents said that new bridges needed to be built to alleviate congestion, particularly over the Columbia and the Willamette Rivers.
- Many respondents said that tolls should be implemented only on new roadways and not existing roadways.
- Some respondents said that a third bridge should be built over the Columbia River east of I-205, connecting around Troutdale and Camas.
- Several respondents said that new highways needed to be added to address the steady population increase.
- Some respondents said that new routes should be added to bypass existing congested areas.

10.9.3 Opposition to Expanding New or Existing Roadways

- Many respondents said that the toll revenue should not be used to expand roadways.
- Many respondents said that tolling should be implemented first, before determining whether additional road capacity was needed on the highways.
- Several respondents noted the concept of induced demand and said that tolling was a more effective congestion management strategy compared to adding roadway capacity.
- Some respondents said that tolling should be used as part of a larger strategy to reduce overall automobile trips and address climate change.

10.10 Personal Financial Impacts

About 350 comments addressed personal financial impacts of tolling and how tolling could impact housing.

Overall, many respondents expressed concern about the cost of a toll in light of the general cost of living in the region and rising inflation. Many respondents said that paying a toll would be a significant economic burden, in some cases even if they didn't consider themselves to be experiencing low incomes.

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to personal financial impacts.

10.10.1 Cost of Living and Inflation

- Many respondents noted that the general cost of living in the Portland metropolitan area is already very high and that increasing the cost of commuting would put additional strain on people already struggling financially. Housing, fuel prices, childcare, and the cost of food were cited most frequently as top cost of living concerns.
- A few respondents expressed concern specifically about inflation and the recent rise in the cost of gas, goods, and services.

10.10.2 Impacts to Personal Budgets, Small Businesses, and Property Values

- Some respondents expressed concern that the price of tolls would negatively affect their personal budgets, and often noted that they simply did not make enough money to afford tolls.
- A few respondents expressed concern that tolls would negatively affect their small businesses. They suggested that tolling would hurt their profitability or, in a few cases, force them to shut down their businesses. Food and grocery delivery drivers (DoorDash, GrubHub etc.) and rideshare drivers (Uber, Lyft, etc.) were particularly concerned about the impact of tolls to their business income.
- A few respondents expressed concern about how tolls would affect their property values. These comments suggested that increases in neighborhood traffic resulting from rerouting would negatively affect the desirability of their area.

COMMENTS ABOUT PERSONAL FINANCIAL IMPACTS

"Delivery drivers may be taking up road space, but these apps are not going away anytime soon...Tolls would take huge chunks from our profits (already dwindling from rising gas prices)."

"I have to drive my personal vehicle for my work, and I literally cannot afford another bill...I simply cannot afford to pay another fee or to lose my job because I can't drive."

"Please oh god please fix I-5. As a business owner trying to get my employees back into our downtown office, I'm constantly battling resistance to commuting from Vancouver on I-5."

10.11 Purpose and Need

About 350 comments address the purpose and need of tolling. Comments summarized under “purpose and need” cover the project Purpose and Need Statement, and questions as to whether tolling will reduce traffic. The Purpose and Need Statement identifies the transportation problem that the project is intended to address (purpose) and the reasons behind the problem (need).

Overall, many respondents said that tolling would not effectively address congestion, noting that many people have limited or no alternative options for transportation and limited flexibility in their schedule. Several respondents expressed that tolling will not be effective and only serves as a revenue source. In addition, several respondents said that implementing tolling would increase traffic in local roads due to diversion and create unsafe conditions.

The following section summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to purpose and need.

COMMENTS ABOUT PURPOSE AND NEED

“The only true way to reduce traffic is to provide robust, viable alternative modes of transport - i.e., transit and bicycle infrastructure. Congestion pricing is a good way to get drivers out of the car for the first time, but a poor way to keep them out without supporting investment into alternatives.”

“Workers need to work a set time which is why we have rush hour. ODOT [can’t] change the time people need to go to work. This will not help traffic and will create issues for neighborhood traffic.”

10.11.1 Effectiveness of Tolling to Manage Congestion

- Many respondents expressed concern that tolling would not effectively manage congestion.
- Several respondents said tolling would create more congestion on local roads.
- Several respondents said that given their experience with tolling in states such as Washington and California, tolling would not be effective at addressing congestion or air quality in Oregon.
- Some respondents said that tolling would disproportionately burden low-income communities who have limited or no alternative transportation options.
- A few respondents said tolling would not reduce congestion during peak traffic times because workers without flexible schedules will continue driving during peak hours.
- A few respondents said that tolling could be effective if transportation alternatives such as public transit, biking, walking are safe and accessible.

10.11.2 Need for Tolling

- Some respondents said that improving and creating viable alternatives to single-car travel can manage congestion without the need to implement tolling.
- Some respondents said that there is not a need to raise revenue through tolling because people already pay taxes for road improvements.
- A few respondents supported the implementation of tolling to manage and reduce congestion and pollution.
- A few respondents said that the purpose of tolling is only a revenue source rather than a congestion management.

10.11.3 Project Implementation

- A few respondents said that tolling should not include highway expansion.

- A few respondents said that tolling should be implemented prior to considering highway expansion.
- A few respondents said that new roads should be created as an alternative to tolling to manage congestion.
- A few respondents said congestion pricing revenue should improve alternative transportation options.

10.12 Congestion Observations and Impacts

About 340 comments addressed how congestion affects people, behavior patterns, the economy, and the environment. Comments also covered topics related to changes in personal behavior or travel patterns due to congestion and perceptions, and observations of congestion changes and patterns.

Overall, many respondents noted personal experience with tolling in other places and said that it did not significantly reduce traffic congestion. There was significant concern about impacts to local roads as well, with many respondents expressing concern that existing traffic on local roads would get even worse due to diversion. Many respondents referenced congestion on roadways around West Linn and Oregon City.

COMMENTS ABOUT CONGESTION OBSERVATIONS AND IMPACTS

“Traffic is already bad in West Linn without the toll. You’re going to make it so much worse in this town, people will get off the freeway and go through this town just to avoid the toll.”

“Let traffic congestion limit the amount of traffic. People will find the solution that best fits them. Not everyone minds sitting in traffic.”

The following sections summarize the major themes from the comments received pertaining to congestion observations and impacts.

10.12.1 Effectiveness of Tolling

- Many respondents did not believe that tolling would effectively reduce congestion. Respondents often noted personal experience with traffic in other cities or regions that have implemented tolling.
- Many respondents expressed concern that traffic congestion would shift from the highways to the surface roads.
- Many people said that they supported tolling as an effective strategy for managing congestion.
- Several respondents expressed concern that tolling could potentially increase congestion due to a misunderstanding that the tolls would require stopping at a toll booth to pay.

10.12.2 Areas of Congestion

- Many respondents noted that traffic congestion is as bad or worse on local roads compared to I-5 and I-205.
- Many respondents identified West Linn and surrounding areas as having particularly congested local streets, including OR-43 and Willamette Falls Drive. Many people were concerned about additional congestion in this area.
- Some people noted that congestion is primarily at or near the on- and off-ramps of the highway.
- Some people noted that congestion was as bad or worse on other highways, particularly OR-217, as well as I-84 and US-26.

- A few respondents noted that congestion is a problem at all times of day and not just during stated rush hour times.

10.12.3 Causes of Congestion

- Several respondents said that a lack of appropriate investment in roadways to keep pace with the growth of the region over the past several decades is a primary cause of congestion.
- Several respondents noted that the lack of viable transit alternatives meant that many people had to drive to get to work or other destinations and contributing to congestion.
- Several respondents noted that congestion was caused by severe chokepoints in the system, such as where highways merge, or where highway lanes go from three to two lanes.
- A few respondents noted that electric vehicles contribute to congestion as much as any other vehicle and suggested they should not receive any special consideration.
- A few respondents noted that the geography of the Portland metropolitan area, with the numerous hills and bridges required to cross rivers, contributes to congestion.
- A few respondents said that out-of-state drivers were a significant contributor to regional congestion.
- A few respondents said that poor road design was a significant contributor to congestion.

10.12.4 Impacts of Congestion

- Several respondents said that congestion can be a valuable thing because it is a natural limiter to the number of highway users.
- Some respondents mentioned that the increase in teleworking has provided more flexibility in commuting times and days that allows people to better deal with congestion on their own.

10.13 Decision-making Process and Public Engagement

About 340 comments addressed the tolling decision-making process and public engagement. Comments summarized under this topic include the decision-making process for determining tolls and the decision-makers related to tolling, including the OTC or Oregon Legislature. This summary also includes comments about the public engagement process.

Overall, many respondents said that there should be a public vote in the decision-making process for tolling. Additional themes included comments on decisions to date by elected officials and ODOT leadership, feedback on the public input process to date, and suggestions for other factors to consider in decision-making.

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to the decision-making process and public engagement.

COMMENTS ABOUT THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

“There should not be a toll. I am a resident of Oregon City and we have to use the freeways to get anywhere into Portland. This is unfair and should be voted on by the citizens.”

“I think it will be really important to have clear and effective project plans underway as the tolling begins. Having really clear benefits from the get-go would go a long way towards acceptance.”

10.13.1 Public Input in Decision-making Process

- Many respondents said that the decision to toll should require a public vote and expressed concern that tolling was moving forward without voter approval.
- Several respondents questioned why tolling was moving forward since they believed people had voted against tolling.
- Several respondents commented that it appeared decisions have already been made and the community was not involved in making the decision.
- A few respondents asked whether the public had voted on whether to implement tolling.
- A few respondents said that specific communities should be consulted in decision-making, specifically historically excluded and underserved communities who have been harmed by transportation projects and policies, cities in east Multnomah County, and Washington state residents.
- Some respondents suggested prioritizing specific factors in the decision-making process, specifically equity, anticipated tolling impacts, future conditions, community, and climate.
- A few respondents said that decision-makers should find another solution to improve roads and infrastructure.
- A few respondents expressed concern with ODOT management and their role in making decisions on behalf of residents.

10.13.2 Public Input and Process

- Many respondents noted that the way the survey was designed assumed respondents supported tolling and said the survey should have provided a way for respondents to indicate if they support or oppose tolling.
- Many respondents supported advancing congestion pricing and expediting the planning process.
- Some respondents said that public input should be listened to and responded to.
- A few respondents said that congestion pricing should move forward before highway expansion projects.
- A few respondents said that the voices of affected communities need to be elevated and empowered to make decisions, especially residents in neighborhoods potentially affected by tolling and communities that experienced past harm from ODOT transportation projects.
- A few respondents expressed concern that it would be difficult to address all interests and opposing views and trying to do so could slow down the implementation of tolling.

10.13.3 Public Engagement and Communications

- Many respondents said the benefits of tolling and how it will solve transportation problems need to be clearly identified.
- Several respondents noted the complexity of congestion pricing and the importance of public education and simple messaging since it is unfamiliar to many in the area.
- Several respondents offered suggestions of specific communities or groups to include in the engagement process including Black, Indigenous, and people of color community leaders, Southwest Washington, faith communities, businesses, and Latino communities.

- A few respondents provided suggestions on the survey tool, specifically the need to allow more space for comment, minimize the amount of survey content, and that the English-language version was easier to complete.
- A few respondents said they appreciated the opportunity to provide input.
- A few respondents said there should be opportunities for engagement to reach vulnerable populations, including those with language barriers, who do not have access to the internet, and who are not subscribed to the tolling contact list.
- A few respondents expressed concern about wasting government funds and time on committee meetings.
- A few respondents offered suggestions for types of engagement activities including focus groups, designing a community-based support program, and forming an oversight committee to ensure there are frequent opportunities for public feedback.

10.14 Economic impacts

About 240 comments addressed economic impacts. Comments summarized under “economic impacts” cover topics including impacts to the broader economy, movement of goods, freight, commerce, and community economic impacts.

Overall, many respondents expressed concerns about the impacts of tolling to local business operations and revenue, as well as the general economic health of the region and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. These concerns were likely more pronounced since the economic analyses for these projects is underway and results are not yet available.

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to economic impacts.

COMMENTS ABOUT PERSONAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS

“Portland has taken enough hits these past two years. This will harm business as people will not seek out restaurant or shopping that is not close to them.”

“Oregonians and freight carriers are over-taxed. We are fed up with our tax and spend government. This plan will further interfere with the supply line in Oregon, as more independent truckers and small freight carriers will just move out of state.”

10.14.1 Impacts to Local Small Businesses

- Many respondents expressed concern about negative impacts to local businesses. Specific concerns mentioned were that tolls may result in fewer customers, increased operating costs, and travel impacts.
- Several respondents expressed concern about the potential impacts to local businesses in West Linn and Oregon City due to potential rerouting into these communities and increased travel costs for potential customers.
- Many respondents expressed concern that potential customers would be less likely to travel to businesses in Portland, with many Southwest Washington residents opting to shop in Vancouver instead.
- Several respondents expressed concern that tolling could make it harder to recruit and retain employees for Portland businesses, especially residents of Southwest Washington.
- A few respondents asked if ODOT had plans to help businesses offset any tolling impacts.

10.14.2 Impacts on Regional Economic Growth and Recovery

- Many respondents expressed concern that tolls will create an additional burden on the local economy, causing loss of jobs and revenue.
- Many respondents expressed concern that tolls could make it less attractive to live and do business in Portland.
- A few respondents expressed concern that tolling could limit long-term regional investments, economic opportunities, and trade.
- A few respondents expressed concern that tolling would slow economic recovery from the pandemic.
- Several respondents expressed concern that tolls would deter tourism, leading to fewer dollars spent in the Portland region.

10.14.3 Impacts to Interstate Commerce and Shipping Costs

- A few respondents noted that freight carriers pay mileage taxes and expressed concern that additional cost impacts could encourage small freight carriers to move out of state.
- Many respondents expressed concern that tolls would have a negative affect shipping costs, which would lead to increased prices for goods.

10.14.4 Impacts to Communities

- Many respondents expressed concern that tolls would negatively affect families and the working middle class, with many specifically mentioning impacts to families living in Clackamas County communities.
- A few respondents said that traffic rerouting onto local streets could reduce local property values.
- A few respondents expressed concern that tolling in the Portland metropolitan area could contribute to gentrification.
- A few respondents expressed concern about the financial impact of tolling on commuters driving from Southwest Washington to the Portland metropolitan area.

10.15 Other Congestion Management Ideas

About 230 comments addressed other congestion management ideas. Comments summarized under “other congestion management ideas” include ideas and suggestions for other ways of managing congestion, instead of or in addition to tolling.

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to other congestion management ideas.

COMMENTS ABOUT OTHER CONGESTION MANAGEMENT IDEAS

“Congestion pricing shouldn’t be the first solution to increased traffic; that’s an inevitable side effect of our growing population. Focus on expanding transit, safe bike lanes, and better opportunities to avoid driving altogether.”

“I strongly disagree with tolling all lanes. Infrastructure improvements with additional “Fast Trak” lanes and free use for carpools would be much better. The plan as it stands will simply increase traffic on poorly maintained local roads.”

10.15.1 Transportation Options

- Many respondents said that there needs to be increased investment in transit options to make it a viable and attractive alternative to driving.
- Several respondents said that there needs to be increased investments in biking and walking infrastructure to make them safe and viable alternatives to driving.
- Several respondents said that MAX should be extended, particularly into downtown Vancouver.
- A few respondents said that transit should be free to encourage ridership.
- A few respondents said that there should be a high-speed rail system to better connect major destinations to Portland, such as Seattle, Salem, and Eugene.

10.15.2 Making the Current System More Efficient

- Several respondents said that the highways should have tolled express lanes, rather than tolling all lanes, to provide an option to pay for congestion-free travel.
- Some respondents said that there should be more HOV lanes instead of a toll, to encourage carpooling. A few respondents said that HOV lanes should be 3+.
- A few respondents said that freight vehicles should be discouraged from highway travel.
- A few respondents said that increasing the speed limit could improve congestion.
- A few respondents said that better highway design could improve congestion.
- A few respondents said that better enforcement of illegal vehicles could improve congestion.
- A few respondents said that discouraging out-of-state drivers from using the roadways could improve congestion.
- A few respondents said that closing some of the on- and off-ramps could reduce congestion.

10.15.3 Regional Opportunities for Congestion Relief

- Several respondents said that additional capacity should be added to existing roadways instead of charging a toll.
- Several respondents said that the state should work with employers to encourage flexible work at home schedules and/or other incentive programs to encourage employees to drive less.

- Several respondents said that there should be better regional planning efforts to minimize the impacts of growth, to improve housing affordability, and to provide more opportunities for people to live closer to their work and other destinations.
- A few respondents said that there should be better driver training programs to teach people how to drive on the highways.

10.16 Safety

About 230 comments addressed safety. Comments summarized under “safety” cover how tolls will affect safety in the Portland metropolitan region as well as observations and concerns regarding safety using the transportation system.

Overall, respondents largely focused on the impacts of rerouting on safety in residential areas as well as the safety of alternate modes of travel, specifically active transportation (biking, transit, and walking). Comments related to safety most notably focused on the increased risk of road violence and the potential subsequent risk for serious injury or fatalities among active transportation users and drivers in residential neighborhoods. Respondents also shared feedback that they don’t currently use active transportation or transit very often due to safety concerns.

COMMENTS ABOUT SAFETY

“Traffic will re-route to non-freeway routes. The adjacent areas need to be prepared for the additional traffic and plan effectively to address any potential safety issues.”

“The worst possible outcome of this project would be incentivizing drivers to use surface streets instead of these highways. As someone who bikes and walks on streets near I-205 daily, I’m safer if more drivers use the highways rather than surface streets.”

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to safety.

10.16.1 Impacts of Rerouting on Safety

- Many respondents expressed concern that rerouting would cause unsafe driving behavior and increased traffic incidents resulting in collisions, serious injuries, and fatalities in residential neighborhoods. Respondents shared particular concern for the safety of children and families, as well as people using inadequate, or unprotected active transportation infrastructure.
- A few respondents requested that ODOT implement traffic calming measures to mitigate the effects of rerouting on neighborhood roads.
- A few respondents said that safety issues as a result of rerouting would disproportionately burden low-income communities.
- A few respondents said that police need to enforce traffic laws to combat safety issues resulting from rerouting.

10.16.2 Safety of Other Modes of Travel

- Several respondents said that public transit needs to be made cleaner and safer for it to be a viable transportation option.
- Several respondents said that active transportation infrastructure needs to be cleared of debris and made safer for it to be a viable alternative to driving. Respondents particularly noted houseless encampments alongside bicycle and pedestrian routes.

10.16.3 Additional Transportation Safety Concerns

- Some respondents said that the dependency on highways is a considerable safety concern due to high collision rates.
- Some respondents said that congestion is a major factor in the safety of roads, and ODOT should prioritize reducing congestion.
- A few respondents said that ODOT should consider the safety of the unhoused population who live along roadsides.
- A few respondents said that toll revenue should be spent on improving safety on tolled facilities and unsafe corridors.
- A few respondents said that ODOT should prioritize fixing potholes and damaged roads.
- A few respondents noted general public safety issues in the City of Portland.

10.17 Environmental Impacts

About 200 comments addressed environmental impacts. Comments summarized under “environmental impacts” cover topics including climate change and the impact of transportation on climate change, the positive or negative impacts of congestion and/or tolling on the ecology and environment, and how tolling might affect public health (i.e., by increasing or decreasing air pollution through increased or decreased congestion).

Overall, respondents were mainly concerned with addressing climate change and air quality, though there were mixed opinions on the role of tolling in moving these goals forward. Many respondents agreed that tolling could help address climate change and that it should be a critical goal of tolling, particularly in how tolling revenue is allocated. Others questioned tolling’s efficacy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and expressed concern for potential reductions in air quality, particularly in neighborhoods experiencing diversion.

COMMENTS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

“Please prioritize reducing vehicle trips and greenhouse gas emissions. Revenue from tolls should go toward active transportation and transit, not highway expansion projects.”

“This is a bad idea. Invest in alternative and greener transportation options instead. This will not reduce traffic enough to reduce the environmental impact of Portland’s freeway systems.”

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to environmental impacts.

10.17.1 Environmental Impacts from Drivers Rerouting to Surface Streets

- Some respondents expressed concern that increased rerouting and diversion from tolling would result in reduced air quality in residential communities.
- A few respondents expressed concern that the effects of reduced air quality resulting from diversion would disproportionately affect historically excluded and underserved communities.
- A few respondents shared concern that rerouting would cause increased noise pollution in their community.

10.17.2 Impact on Carbon Emissions and Climate Change

- Many respondents said that due to the climate crisis, reducing emissions is urgent and climate mitigation should be the priority of tolling projects.
- Some respondents said that tolling is an effective and powerful tool for reducing emissions. These respondents said tolling should be used as a means to reduce vehicle-miles traveled and emissions in the transportation sector.
- Some respondents expressed concern that tolling would not meaningfully help address climate change issues but will burden the middle class and lower class.
- Some respondents said that congestion and idling are the main causes of highway carbon emissions.
- A few respondents noted that rerouted trips are longer and less fuel efficient than trips that utilize the highway, thus increasing carbon emissions.
- A few respondents said that the climate benefits of tolling needs to be clearly communicated to the community.

10.17.3 Public Health Concerns from Increased Traffic and Congestion

- Some respondents said that a well-designed discount and credit program could incentivize behavior change and reduce emissions. Comments presented a few suggestions for entities that should receive discounts and credits, and mixed opinions on whether or not electric vehicles should be eligible for a reduced rate program.
- A few respondents expressed concern that emissions caused by the transportation sector would disproportionately harm historically excluded and underserved communities.
- A few respondents said that revenue collected from tolls should be prioritized in communities that are disproportionately affected by vehicle emissions.

10.17.4 Suggestions for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Several respondents said that ODOT and other local agencies should pursue projects that reduce community members dependence on single-occupancy vehicles. Some supported spending toll revenue on projects with demonstrated climate benefits, such as the expansion of active transportation networks.
- Several respondents said that increasing highway capacity will increase CO₂ emissions and that ODOT should not expand highways if it wants to prioritize reducing CO₂ emissions.
- Some respondents said that increasing highway capacity would reduce idling time and subsequently reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

10.18 Project Scope and Objectives

About 100 comments addressed the project scope and objectives. Comments summarized under “project scope and objectives” cover the scope of what is included in the project (which roadways are included/excluded), and the proposed goals and objectives of tolling.

Overall, respondents suggested alternative locations for tolling, such as other highways or limiting the tolling on I-5 and I-205 to certain lanes or areas. Respondents also provided some suggestions on the potential objectives of a tolling program.

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to the project scope and objectives.

COMMENTS RELATED TO CONCURRENT PROJECTS

“We should toll all major arteries to include I-5, I-205, 217 or none at all. Focusing on or implementing tolling on 205 only is discriminatory towards East Portland residents and will create many unintended consequences.”

“I believe any successful road pricing system should focus on managing traffic demand and significantly improve the viability of all transportation modes.”

10.18.1 Tolling Locations

- Some respondents said that only bridges should be tolled.
- A few respondents said tolling should be expanded beyond I-5 and I-205 to other highways including I-84 and US 26.
- A few respondents said only one highway should be tolled.
- A few respondents expressed concerns with the location of the tolls on I-205 because alternative transportation options are limited.

10.18.2 Goals and Objectives

- Some respondents said tolling should be implemented to reduce vehicle-miles traveled and should be done prior to considering any highway expansions.
- Some respondent questioned the goal of reducing congestion through tolls and believed it would not be an effective tool.
- Some respondents said that if the goal is to reduce highway use, investments and incentivizing other modes of transportations should be prioritized.
- A few respondents said that tolling should only be implemented temporally to fund specific projects and should be disbanded once projects are completely funded.
- A few responded suggested ensuring that tolling is meeting its goals after implementation and re-evaluating if goals are not being met.
- A few respondents said that air quality and addressing climate change should be prioritized and should encourage low-emission transportation alternatives.
- A few respondents said that the goal of tolling is not clear and suggested focusing on one goal.

10.19 Other Examples of Tolling

About 160 comments addressed other examples of tolling. Comments summarized under “other examples of tolling” cover responses that identify and share experience about tolling in places other than the Portland metropolitan area.

Overall, respondents expressed both negative and positive observations of tolling based on experiences in other areas, and also offered specific planning or design considerations for tolling that should be modeled from other systems.

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to other examples of tolling.

10.19.1 General Observations About Tolling in Other Areas

- Many respondents expressed concerns about tolling I-5 and I-205 based on experience in other areas, with specific mentions of road conditions, frequency of tolls, financial impacts, congested highways, pollution, impacts to people with low incomes and working class, accidents, and issues with rerouting. Areas mentioned included New England, the East Coast, Texas, Seattle, Utah, California, Dallas/Fort Worth, Virginia, Minneapolis, Chicago, New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois, Europe, Maryland, and SR 520 in Washington.
- Many respondents noted that tolling is common practice in other areas and said that people will adapt.
- Many respondents said that tolling works well in other areas, and ODOT should move forward with tolling, with a few specifically noting it helps to manage congestion and maintain good road conditions. Comments identified that planners should model best practices from places such as Montreal, Washington, D.C., Seattle/Puget Sound region, Miami, Texas, Oklahoma, the Bay area, New York City, and Massachusetts.

10.19.2 Planning or Design Suggestions from Other Toll Projects

- Many respondents said that there should be some tolled lanes and some free travel lanes similar to the East Coast, Houston, California, or the Seattle area.
- Several respondents said to avoid tolling both I-5 and I-205, and instead provide an alternate route or highway that is not tolled, similar to other states with toll roads.
- A few respondents provided suggestions for how tolling could work, including making tolling as simple as possible like the Bay area and tolling drivers based on distance traveled like the New York State Thruway.

COMMENTS ABOUT OTHER TOLLING EXAMPLES

“Look to the Miami, Florida area where tolling, and even specially built toll roads, is prevalent- on the tolled roads, traffic runs smoothly even during rush hour. I love the tolled roads, they were well kept, easily accessible and regularly used, especially by tourists who increased the revenue...”

“I’m concerned if both I-205 and I-5 are tolled, there will not be sufficient non-toll options. I like the variable toll lane option in use in Bellevue, Washington which allows drivers to choose non-toll lanes.”

10.20 Proposed Alternatives

About 140 comments addressed proposed alternatives. Comments summarized under “proposed alternatives” cover possible alternatives to tolling to achieve similar goals, as well as possible alternative ways to toll.

Overall, many respondents suggested tolling only one or some lanes while maintaining one or some lanes with no tolls. Some respondents suggested creating a tolled express lane and keeping the rest of the lanes without tolling to provide drivers with choice. In addition, many respondents expressed support for ensuring there are adequate and safe alternatives to driving before tolling is implemented.

COMMENTS RELATED TO PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

“Please only apply this to an express lane. Please don’t add obstacles for getting downtown.”

“Provides cars with more than two people to ride for free or a free carpool lane during rush hour, and only charge cars with a driver.”

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to proposed alternatives.

10.20.1 General Alternatives

- Some respondents said they preferred paying a new tax or fee once a year as an alternative to implementing tolling.
- A few respondents said that an additional bridge crossing the Columbia River should be built as an alternative congestion management strategy instead of tolling.
- A few respondents said there should be exemptions for residents of areas where there are limited or no alternative transportation options.
- A few respondents said that other revenue sources should be used, such as the gas tax, federal funding, or traffic violation fines as an alternative to implementing tolling.

10.20.2 Structure of Tolling

- Many respondents supported having an express lane that is tolled while maintaining other lanes with no tolls.
- Some respondents said that there should be a carpool lane that is exempt from tolls.
- Some respondents opposed widening highways to reduce congestion.
- A few respondents said there should not be a toll when there is little to no congestion, such as midnight through 6 a.m.
- A few respondents suggested expanding I-205 and I-5 and tolling only the additional lanes.
- A few respondents said that car value and type should dictate the toll amount (i.e., more expensive cars should have a higher toll).

10.20.3 Location of Tolling

- Some respondents supported tolling only bridges crossing the Columbia River.
- A few respondents said that additional highways should be tolled including OR 217, US 26, WA 14 and I-84.

- A few respondents said that only one bridge across the Columbia River should be tolled instead of both.
- A few respondents said that tolling I-205 would disproportionately affect West Linn and Oregon City residents.
- A few respondents said that East Portland residents would be disproportionately affected by tolls and said tolling should impact wealthy areas.

10.20.4 Alternative Transportation

- Many respondents said it's important that alternative modes of transportation such as public transportation, biking, and walking options are safe and available prior to implementing tolls.
- A few respondents expressed support for extending public transportation option across the Columbia River.

10.21 Other Concurrent Projects

About 130 comments addressed other concurrent projects, including other ongoing transportation-related infrastructure projects, and ongoing tolling/road pricing projects.

Overall, many respondents discussed the Interstate Bridge Replacement program and the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvements Project. Respondents were generally interested in better transit and other alternatives, particularly light rail, across the Interstate Bridge as an option to avoid tolls. Respondents had mixed opinions on whether toll revenue should be used on these concurrent projects. A significant number of respondents did not want toll revenues to be used for highway expansion at all, particularly the Rose Quarter project. Other respondents supported toll revenues going toward concurrent highway projects, including the Interstate Bridge Replacement program.

COMMENTS RELATED TO CONCURRENT PROJECTS

"While I encourage programs that encourage alternatives to cars, given it's virtually impossible to cross the I-5 bridge to Vancouver without a car. Expanding the MAX over the river is my number one priority."

"Implement congestion pricing before Rose Quarter construction."

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to concurrent projects.

10.21.1 Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

- Many respondents supported light rail as part of the Interstate Bridge Replacement program, with a few noting interest in improved bike infrastructure and a new park-and-ride.
- Several respondents supported replacing the Interstate Bridge, with specific comments noting the need for seismic upgrades and a better option to cross the river.
- A few respondents said there should not be light rail as part of the Interstate Bridge Replacement program.

10.21.2 I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project

- Many respondents opposed the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project moving forward.

- A few respondents said that the I-5 Rose Quarter should be widened to help with congestion issues.

10.21.3 Relationship between Tolling and Regional Transportation Plans and Projects

- Many respondents said that congestion pricing should be implemented before constructing highway improvements because tolling may reduce demand.
- A few respondents said that significant challenges with the regional highway system needed to be fixed first before implementing tolling.
- Several respondents said that toll revenue should not go toward replacing the Interstate Bridge or to the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project.
- Many respondents said that toll revenue should be used for specific improvements, (for instance to fix the Interstate Bridge or add highway capacity on I-205) and should not go toward other areas or needs.
- Several respondents noted the need to toll the Interstate Bridge in order to pay for improvements, with a few saying that tolls should go away after the bridge is completed.
- A few respondents said that transit improvements are needed before tolling begins.
- A few respondents suggested considering whether tolls are needed on other congested highways such as Highway 26, I-85, and I-405.

10.21.4 General Comments on Regional Transportation

- Several respondents expressed concern about highway expansion projects.
- Many respondents said that roadway conditions in the region need to be improved, specifically mentioning I-5, I-84, OR-217, U.S. 26, local roads, and general roadway maintenance.
- Several respondents said that non-highway improvements are needed, specifically mentioning light rail, bus service, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

10.22 Freight

About 60 comments addressed freight. Comments summarized under “freight” cover how tolling could affect ground shipping or freight movement.

Overall, comments related to freight were mixed. Some respondents said that freight should receive a discount or credit from tolls for a variety of reasons, while some respondents said that freight should be charged a higher rate for various reasons.

The following summarizes the major themes from the comments received pertaining to goals and objectives.

COMMENTS RELATED TO FREIGHT

“I do not believe that ODOT, decision-makers, and project planners are concerned with how regional business will offset their costs of transporting goods and services by raising prices assessed to their clients and customers.”

“Price trucks higher to encourage them off the highways during the rush hours.”

10.22.1 Concerns about Tolls on Freight

- Several respondents expressed concern that a toll on freight vehicles would increase the cost of shipping goods, which would be passed on to consumers through higher prices.

- Some respondents said that freight vehicles should get a low or reduced toll rate because they are providing a service that benefits the greater regional community.
- A few respondents noted that freight vehicles already pays additional taxes and should not be charged an additional toll.

10.22.2 Higher Tolls for Freight

- Several respondents said that freight vehicles should be charged higher rates or should be charged instead of individual car drivers.
- A few respondents said that freight vehicles should be charged a higher toll rate because they affect roadways the most.
- A few respondents said that freight vehicles be charged a higher toll rate because those costs could be accommodated by the freight company overall.

10.22.3 Other Ways to Address Freight Congestion

- Several respondents said that there should strategies for moving freight to rail as a way of reducing trucks that contribute to congestion.
- A few respondents said that all freight vehicles should use I-205 as a bypass around central Portland.
- A few respondents said that freight vehicles should be discouraged on the interstates during rush hour.

11 Community Engagement Liaison Discussion Group Feedback

This section includes a summary of feedback from the eight discussion groups. This includes sharing the results of live polling that was done at each group as well as key themes and messages that came out of the group discussions. Note that each discussion group was unique and not all live polls or questions were discussed with all discussion groups.

Figure 11-1 Screenshot from the Chinese Discussion Group.

Your turn to weigh to (请你来权衡一下)



Have you ever used a highway system or bridge with a toll? (您曾经使用过公路或桥梁收费系统吗?)

- Yes (是)
- No (否)
- Not sure (不确定)



11.1 General Questions and Comments

After a brief presentation by project staff, discussion group participants had the opportunity to ask general questions about the toll program. We noted the following themes among the discussion group questions:

- **Decision-making process.** In many groups, participants were curious about when and how decisions were made about tolling, including decisions about tolling all lanes and whether tolling would occur at all hours. Some participants suggested that there should be a process for voter approval.
- **Details of toll rates.** In many groups, participants wanted more information about the expected toll rates for peak and off-peak hours.
- **Impact of tolls on traffic.** In several groups, participants wanted more information, detail, and examples about how tolling would reduce traffic congestion. Some participants were skeptical that tolling would have any impact on reducing congestion.
- **Current revenue uses.** In several groups, participants asked why a new revenue stream was needed and asked how existing funds from other taxes (gas, income) were allocated.
- **Interest in whether tolls would be tax deductible.** In several groups, participants asked if tolls would be tax deductible.

11.2 Eligibility for a Low-income Program

Using a live poll, participants were asked to review several ways that people could demonstrate eligibility for a low-income toll program and mark which ones they supported (they could mark multiple options). Table 11-1 summarizes the live-poll results from discussion group participants.⁶ Generally, there was fairly even distribution among the options, with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) receiving the most support overall. Of note, in the Black and Chinese groups, few or no individuals selected the TriMet Low Income Fare Program. In the Vietnamese and Russian groups, few people selected the Low-Income Utility Program.

Table 11-1 ODOT wants to make it easy for drivers experiencing financial hardship to apply for a discount. Which of these options would you support?

Statement	Vietnamese	Chinese	Russian	Black	Disabilities	Youth	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color	TOTAL
Drivers who qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are eligible for the discount	8	2	2	2	6	4	8	32
Families that qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch automatically are eligible for the discount	7	2	2	2	5	5	6	29
Transit riders who qualify for the TriMet Low Income Fare Program are eligible for the discount	7	0	4	1	5	3	7	27
Residents who qualify for the Low-Income Utility Service Program (for example, Pacific Power CARE Program) are eligible for the discount	1	3	1	2	6	6	5	24

ADDITIONAL THEMES

We noted the following themes during discussions on this question:

- **Concern about the definition of “low income.”** In several groups, people mentioned the challenges of using typical income standards as a way to demonstrate eligibility, noting that they do not account for many living costs, such as rent or ongoing medical expenses. Some people also noted that federal poverty guidelines may not be appropriate because Portland is more expensive than other parts of Oregon and the U.S.
- **Questions about eligibility for undocumented people.** Several participants asked about undocumented people and how they could demonstrate eligibility and if their unique needs were considered.
- **Consideration of other groups that should be eligible for a discount or credit.** Several people mentioned the need for a discount or credit program for families that may not qualify as low income, such as the “working poor” or the “hardworking middle class.” Several people mentioned that the program should focus less on income and more on the type of job, noting that delivery drivers, students, and in-home health care providers could be affected and should get discounts or credits.

⁶ Not all discussion groups conducted live polls.

Some people mentioned the importance of having business owners involved in paying for employee tolls.

- **Concern about fairness of low-income program.** Some participants expressed concern about a low-income discount program because they thought that people experiencing low incomes use the tolled roadways less and so have less need for a discount than working families or people at other income levels that still have financial hardships. They said that all income levels should pay the same toll rate.

11.3 Discount and Credit Options for a Low-income Program

Using a live poll, participants were asked to review several options for a low-income toll program and mark which ones they supported (they could mark multiple options). Table 11-2 summarizes the live-poll results from discussion group participants.⁷ Ongoing discounts or exemptions received the most support from all groups.

Table 11-2 Which of the following options would you support for a low-income toll program?

Option	Spanish	Black	Disabilities	Youth	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color	TOTAL
Ongoing discounts or exemptions for people experiencing financial hardship	7	2	6	3	7	23
A daily or monthly toll cap for frequent interstate users experiencing low incomes	5	1	4	3	3	15
Free transponder with a \$25 initial credit for people experiencing financial hardship	2	2	4	2	6	14
Receipt of free transit credits that can be applied to the use of buses, trains or streetcars in the region	2	2	5	2	2	11
Providing people experiencing low incomes with a credit for a limited number of free or discounted toll trips per month	5	1	3	1	2	11

COMPARISON WITH SURVEY RESULTS

A similar question was asked on the survey (Table 11-3). The following shows the comparative ranking of options between the discussion group live poll and the survey. However, the option of ongoing discounts or exemptions for people experiencing financial hardship was asked only in the discussion groups and not in the survey.

⁷ Not all discussion groups conducted all live polls.

Table 11-3 Ranking of Options Compared between Discussion Groups and Surveys

Option	Live-Poll Ranking	Survey Ranking
Ongoing discounts or exemptions for people experiencing financial hardship	1	N/A
A daily or monthly toll cap for frequent interstate users experiencing low incomes	2	1
Free transponder with a \$25 initial credit for people experiencing financial hardship	3	4
Receipt of free transit credits that can be applied to the use of buses, trains or streetcars in the region	4	3
Providing people experiencing low incomes with a credit for a limited number of free or discounted toll trips per month	5	2

ADDITIONAL THEMES

We noted the following themes during discussions on this question:

- **Interest in a toll cap but opportunity for better messaging of this option.** Overall, discussion group participants agreed that a cap on the total amount of tolls that someone might pay daily or monthly was a good idea; however, in several groups, there was some misunderstanding about a toll cap, with some people assuming that toll caps would limit a driver to a specific number of trips. This confusion was clarified during the meeting but is notable for future communications about a toll cap.
- **Some concern about a transit credit.** Participants commented that transit was not a realistic option for them due to availability of transit or schedule considerations. Another concern was expressed that if people were already using transit, they were not likely to drive on tolled facilities so were less likely to be affected by a toll.
- **Suggestions for other discount/credit options.** Several people offered other ideas for the low-income program benefits:
 - Offer certain number of free trips a month instead of credits (i.e., 60 free tolls a month).
 - Provide an unlimited monthly pass to local residents and working people who use the highway daily.
 - Offer free toll credits or a discount to students who get good grades. Give toll credits as an incentive.
 - Allow transfer of free transit credits to toll credits.
 - Provide income-tax credit for tolls.
- **Benefits for everyone.** Several people thought that some of these benefits should be extended to everyone. One person said that the \$25 credit and free transponder should be given to everyone at the beginning to ease people into the toll program. Another suggested that transit should be free for everyone to simplify the process and provide an incentive to not drive.

11.4 Enrollment Options for a Low-income Program

Using a live poll, participants were asked to review several ways that people could enroll in a low-income toll program and mark which ones they thought would be most convenient. (They could mark multiple options.) Table 11-4 summarizes the live-poll results from discussion group participants.⁸ A web form or

⁸ Not all discussion groups conducted live polls.

app was the most preferred option for all groups except for people with disabilities who chose in-person the most frequently.

Table 11-4 One of the goals of a program for people experiencing financial hardship is to make it easy for participants to enroll. Which option would be most convenient?

Option	Vietnamese	Chinese	Russian	Black	Disabilities	Youth	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color	TOTAL
Web form or app	5	5	5	3	4	6	8	36
Mailed application	5	5	1	1	4	2	4	22
In person (for example, at a grocery store or other easily accessible location)	2	0	1	1	6	3	7	20
Through an agency or non-profit organization where people access other services	1	0	0	1	3	3	7	15
Through an employer	1	0	0	1	3	2	5	12
Through a religious organization	0	1	1	0	4	2	5	13
I don't have a preference	0	1	3	1	1	2	5	13
Other	0	2	3	1	2	0	0	8

We noted the following themes during discussions on this question:

- **Providing more options is better.** While web form or app was the most common answer, during the discussion many participants mentioned the importance of having a variety of options that could accommodate the varying needs of potential applicants.
- **Staff support is critical.** Many participants noted the value of having someone available, in-person or via phone, to guide them through the process if they were having trouble. This seemed particularly important to participants for people who primarily speak non-English languages. One person noted that adequate staffing is critical because they have seen other programs get overwhelmed by not having enough staff support.
- **Ways to make the process simple.** Many people highlighted the importance of making the process as easy as possible. Ideas for doing this included having applications at social service offices and post offices. Another person suggested automatic enrollment through another process such as voter registration or getting a driver's license.

11.5 Barriers to Participation in a Low-income Program

Participants were asked about potential barriers that could exist for people experiencing financial hardship to participate in a low-income discount or credit program. Participants were encouraged to answer verbally or through the chat but were not required to answer.

ADDITIONAL THEMES

We noted the following themes during discussions on this question:

- **Language barriers.** Several participants noted significant barriers (including language, reading, writing, and verbal comprehension) for these types of programs.
- **Make the application process as easy as possible.** Many people reiterated the importance of simplicity and ease because the process of applying for these types of programs can be a substantial barrier unto itself. Several people encouraged automatic enrollment through other programs such as SNAP.
- **Awareness of the program.** Several people mentioned that it was important to make sure people know about the program. They noted many people do not have time or energy to seek these programs out, so it is important to do an outreach and education campaign.
- **Consider people without bank accounts.** Several people noted that people are experiencing low incomes who may use only cash on a regular basis. One person was concerned if there was not an option to pay directly with cash through a toll booth.

11.6 Ensuring Equity in the Toll Program

Participants were asked about how ODOT could ensure it is meeting equity goals as tolling is implemented. Participants were encouraged to answer verbally or through the chat but were not required to answer.

ADDITIONAL THEMES

We noted the following themes during discussions on this question:

- **Use of an equity committee.** Many people mentioned that an oversight committee is needed to make sure tolling is implemented equitably. Some people noted that this committee should have direct relationships with community organizations for it to be valuable.
- **General reporting.** Many people liked the idea of regular reports about equity, such as quarterly progress reports that would be available in a variety of languages. One person suggested this should include all the financial information of how much toll revenue was collected and how it was spent.
- **Unique accountability suggestions.** A few people had additional ideas for increasing accountability, including:
 - Establishing a complaint program for tolling in case people are having issues.
 - Setting up meetings with community members to discuss and document how tolling is affecting the community and to identify any barriers to applying for the low-income program.
 - Ensuring ODOT is hiring people from diverse communities.
 - Hiring a third-party auditor to evaluate how well ODOT is meeting equity goals.

11.7 Additional Toll Program Goals

Using a live poll, participants were asked to review a list of additional goals for the Oregon Tolling Program and mark any that they felt were important (participants could choose multiple). Table 11-5 summarizes the live-poll results from discussion group participants.⁹ Overall, benefits to historically excluded and underserved communities received the most support and was the most common answer for the youth and Black, Indigenous, and people of color groups. Community health and safety was the most

⁹ Not all discussion groups conducted live polls

common answer for the Black/African American group, and among the top selections for people with disabilities and the Spanish groups.

Table 11-5 The Oregon Toll Program will apply congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205 to achieve congestion management and generate revenue. Which of these additional goals are important to you?

Goals	Spanish	Black	Disabilities	Youth	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color	TOTAL
Benefits for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities	2	2	4	8	5	21
Community health and safety	5	3	5	3	3	19
Local and regional air quality improvement and reductions in greenhouse gases that help reduce climate change effects	5	1	4	3	4	17
Investments in regional priority congestion relief projects	5	1	2	5	4	17
Enhanced transit, walking, and rolling choices to reduce congestion	1	1	4	4	4	14
Safe travel	3	1	5	1	4	14
Limiting rerouting to adjacent roads and neighborhoods from drivers avoiding the tolled interstates	3	1	4	2	1	11

COMPARISON WITH SURVEY RESULTS

A similar question was asked on the survey. Table 11-6 shows the comparative ranking of options between the discussion groups live poll and the survey.

Table 11-6 Ranking of Options for Discussion Groups and Surveys

Option	Live-Poll Ranking	Survey Ranking
Benefits for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities	1	7
Community health and safety	2	6
Local and regional air quality improvement and reductions in greenhouse gases that help reduce climate change effects	3	2
Investments in regional priority congestion relief projects	4	4
Enhanced transit, walking, and rolling choices to reduce congestion	5	5
Safe travel	6	1
Limiting rerouting to adjacent roads and neighborhoods from drivers avoiding the tolled interstates	7	3

ADDITIONAL THEMES

We noted the following themes during discussions on this question:

- **All options are important.** Several participants mentioned that the question was difficult because all of the options were important and interrelated. A few noted that most of these issues, such as safety and air quality, tend to negatively affect low-income and historically excluded and underserved communities.

- **Concerns about diversion.** Several participants said that tolling would place an undue burden on people living on alternate routes where people would reroute. Additionally, several mentioned the need for safety on local roads that could experience heavier traffic from drivers rerouting to avoid tolls.
- **Air quality concerns.** Some participants mentioned that air quality was incredibly important and overlapped with the community health and safety, noting that people living near highways are often more likely to be Black, Indigenous, and people of color or lower income.

11.8 Strategies for Achieving Climate Goals

Participants were asked to review a list of three climate strategies including 1) providing reliable, low-cost, emissions-reducing alternatives to driving, 2) improving health and safety of those living in neighborhoods near tolled highways, and 3) monitoring local air quality. They were then asked to share which option was most important to them. Participants could answer verbally or through chat but were not required to share comments.

ADDITIONAL THEMES

We noted the following themes during discussions on this question:

- **Need better alternatives to driving.** Several participants noted that it was essential to provide better alternatives to driving to help solve congestion. They acknowledged that work was needed to make transit, pedestrian, and rolling options more compelling.
- **Alternatives to driving not viable for everyone.** Several participants also noted that not everyone is able to use an alternative to driving alone. One person mentioned the challenge of carpooling for some with irregular work hours or unique jobs. Another person mentioned that biking is not possible for families with kids or items that they need to transport.
- **Health and safety in nearby neighborhoods.** Many participants shared concern about the impacts to nearby neighborhoods due to rerouting, noting the increase in traffic, noise, air pollution, and safety risk for those communities. One person suggested tolls on alternate routes as well to reduce diversion.
- **Concern about air pollution.** Several participants expressed disbelief that tolling would help reduce air pollution. They said that tolling would not reduce the number of vehicles but would instead just encourage drivers to take other routes.

11.9 Strategies for Achieving Equity Goals

Participants were asked to share some of the things they felt were most important for tolling in Oregon to reduce barriers and provides benefits historically excluded and underserved communities. Participants could answer verbally or through chat but were not required to share comments.

ADDITIONAL THEMES

We noted the following themes during discussions on this question:

- **Improvements to transit are necessary.** Several participants noted that alternative options such as transit must be accessible and well supported to allow people to have a real choice of how they can get to their destination.

In the people with disabilities group, several participants noted that the current paratransit system does not allow users to cross state lines, so it is difficult for them to use transit to travel from Portland to Vancouver.

- **Consider impacts to most vulnerable groups.** Several participants mentioned the importance of addressing the needs and impacts to the following vulnerable groups who may not qualify for the low-income discount:
 - People with disabilities
 - Everyday users of these roadways
 - Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities
 - Immigrant and refugee communities, and undocumented workers
- **Alternative equitable tolling strategy suggestions.** Participants provided the following alternative tolling strategies that they thought would be more equitable than the existing proposal:
 - Charge trucks higher tolls since they create more congestion and do more road damage.
 - Raise the gas tax instead of a toll.
 - All drivers pay the same regardless of user type.
 - Provide lesser discounts to more people.
- **Trust and accountability.** Some participants noted the lack of trust between ODOT and historically excluded and underserved communities. Participants noted that they are frequently asked for feedback but that they do not feel it is used to significantly influence projects.
- **Messaging and communications.** Some participants highlighted the need to clearly articulate the explicit benefits of tolling because it is not clear how toll revenue will benefit the average user of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan area.

11.10 Benefits to Southwest Washington

Participants were asked whether benefits of the program should be extended to Southwest Washington. This question was optional and most of the discussion groups did not get to this question. In the two groups that did discuss this question, the Chinese group and the Black/African American group, we noted that most participants said that benefits should remain in Oregon. Notably, only one participant from these two groups indicated that they live in Washington state.

12 Community-Based Organization Discussion Group Feedback

This section summarizes the discussion with CBOs focused on sharing best practices to administering low-income programs and common barriers that the organizations encountered in supporting participation in these programs. Participants also offered other comments or suggestions for ODOT consideration. We have summarized key themes and messages for each of the discussion topics.

12.1 Barriers to Participation in a Low-income Program

Participants were asked to share potential barriers for people experiencing low incomes that would prevent their participation in a low-income toll program. We noted the following themes:

- **Avoid impacts from toll penalties and fines.** Participants were concerned families experiencing low incomes may be charged with impactful penalties or fines if they missed receiving a toll bill by mail.
- **Increase awareness about low-income toll program.** Participants emphasized the need for good communication and awareness about the low-income toll program, noting that people experiencing low incomes may be less likely to have a phone or computer. One participant suggested putting up billboards with different languages announcing, "tolls coming soon" and a hotline to call for more information.
- **Use trusted sources.** Participants highlighted the importance of working with CBOs to help spread the word to communities through trusted sources and increase enrollment in low-income programs.

12.2 Best Practices

Participants were asked to share any best practices that their organization developed through partnerships with other programs. We noted the following themes:

- **Coordinate with similar programs to raise awareness.** Participants noted that cross marketing is helpful. For example, if people are enrolling in one low-income program like TriMet's Low Income Fare Program, they should be able to learn about other options including low-income toll benefits.
- **Develop thoughtful messaging in multiple languages.** Participants highlighted that messaging is critical, and significant efforts should go into developing and refining messaging, with feedback from focus groups. Participants agreed that it is important to develop materials in many different languages.

12.3 Enrollment in a Low-income Program

Participants were asked to share any best practices for how to effectively enroll people experiencing low incomes. We noted the following themes:

- **Consider efficiencies with existing screenings.** One participant mentioned that agencies and CBOs often do screenings, which could be a conduit for qualifying people for other programs if that information is allowed to be shared.
- **Partner with CBOs to support enrollment.** Participants highlighted the importance of using partners to spread the word and assist in the enrollment process, including CBOs, social service providers, churches, and community centers.

- **Track and share updates about the application status.** Participants noted that keeping detailed records of applications, tracking how many are submitted and approved, is useful to identify any problem areas and providing status updates to applicants.

12.4 Revenue for Community-identified Priorities

Participants were asked if they would be supportive of a slightly higher toll rate if it meant increased investments for community-identified priorities, such as improved sidewalks or transit facilities near the tolled highways. We noted the following themes:

- **Mixed views on whether to set a higher toll rate to invest in community-identified priorities.** Participants offered the following comments in response to this idea:
 - Support for this option if the low-income program is substantial. A participant noted that a lot of work is needed to advance equity in specific communities and tolling revenue could support this need.
 - Concern expressed about this option since there was skepticism that the revenue would go into areas that need it most. They noted that to ensure money is going back to people that need it, it was better to minimize the impact of toll fees (through lower tolls or discounts/credits).
 - Several participants noted that those who are benefiting the most from lower congestion, such as large businesses, should take on more of the cost of these types of investments.
- **Focus on improving transit options.** Several participants highlighted that the biggest priority should be to improve public transportation options so that people have an alternative to driving on tolled roadways. They noted that both ODOT and TriMet need to move this work forward.

13 Stakeholder Interviews

This section summarizes the key themes and messages from the seven stakeholder interviews with administering agencies and social service organizations.

13.1 Eligibility for a Low-income Program

We asked representatives of the administering agencies and social service providers about the conditions, verifications, and best practices for determining low-income program eligibility. They provided the following comments:

- **Use currently established agency guidelines to determine low-income program eligibility by income.** Participating agencies said they use either U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development yearly median income rates or federal poverty guidelines to determine eligibility for their programs and suggested that ODOT use similar standardized guidelines.
- **Consider automatic eligibility.** Because many low-income programs use the same eligibility standards, an individual's eligibility should be automatically determined based on an their enrollment in other common low-income programs such as the following :
 - SNAP
 - Free and Reduced Lunch programs
 - TriMet Low Income Fare Program
 - Low-income Utility Service programs
 - Portland's Water and Environmental Bureau's low-income program
 - Oregon Health Plan
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Employment Related Daycare (ERDC)
 - Medicaid
- **Additional suggestions offered to verify eligibility.** Suggestions included partnering with the Department of Revenue and Department of Human Services, requiring state identification and paystubs, and allowing for self-certification.

13.2 Applications, Enrollment, and Communication

We asked participants how their organizations designed their applications and enrollment processes, and how they communicated and advertised their programs. They provided the following comments:

- **Simplify the application process and ensure it is easily accessible.** Participants detailed best practices for the application process and recommended that applications should be clear and simple, written in multiple languages, available in multiple digital and hard versions, and easily trackable. The applications should not be complex or require excessive documentation.
- **Avoid terminating enrollment.** While automatic eligibility based on other low-income program enrollment is helpful, it is also important that enrollment is not terminated based on the discontinuation of other programs and services. Oftentimes enrollment can lapse due to application and administrative errors, which should not affect the enrollment in ODOT's program.
- **Providing ongoing enrollment.** The enrollment period for the program should be open year-round and should not require frequent renewal unless there are significant life changes.

- **Address application barriers due to change of address.** Because addresses can frequently change, and the governmental address change process costs money, ODOT should consider application, documentation, and communication processes that are not necessarily bound to a fixed address.
- **Develop partnerships with trusted organizations to support enrollment and conduct awareness campaign.** ODOT should try to cast a wide net by partnering with CBOs, non-profits, and trusted entities like libraries and schools. Participants also noted that CBOs and others should be paid for their help. Additionally, ODOT should consider advertising through social media, mailers, radio, and TV. Communication should also be transmitted in multiple languages.

13.3 Successes in Program Administration

We asked participants about the elements of their programs and services that were going well. They provided the following comments:

- **Centralize application process.** Automatic enrollment and application hubs help to reduce the burden on applicants. Provide participants many ways to apply, pay for services, and connect with services. Existing applications that interviewees recommended include:
 - Online Enrollment System (ONE System)
 - 211 Information
 - Aligned Partner Network (APN)
- **Provide many options to apply.** Offering multiple methods (online, through an app, paper, etc.) help to increase enrollment.

13.4 Challenges in Program Administration

We asked participants about the challenges that they have faced while administering their low-income programs. They provided the following comments:

- **Address distrust of government agencies.** There are often sentiments of distrust with governmental organizations, so partnering with trusted entities is necessary. Further, applicants should be reassured that their information will not be shared. Authentic communication is key. Communicating what decisions have already been made and providing space for input that can have actual impact is a critical balancing act.
- **Limited resources and capacity of other agencies and organizations is a barrier.** Coordinating with other programs and agencies can be a challenge given resources and capacity.
- **Consider challenges that may arise when determining eligibility.** Many people who qualify for low-income programs are not aware of the existence of programs or that they may be eligible. While it is minor, there is an opportunity for fraud in the self-certification process.

13.5 Barriers for Low-income Programs

We asked participants about the barriers their organizations have worked to address. They provided the following comments:

- **Address accessibility needs.** Provide an inclusive and accessible program for people experiencing disabilities, people who speak languages other than English, and people who do not have access to different forms of technology.

- **Allow for assistance in completing applications.** Many applications do not allow for others to apply on the behalf of the applicant. Interviewees indicated that it is helpful to accommodate applicants who need help with completing their application or checking on their application status.

14 Equity Mobility Advisory Committee

The EMAC is advising the OTC and ODOT on how tolls on I-205 and I-5, in combination with other transportation demand management strategies, can include benefits for historically excluded and underserved communities. EMAC meetings are open to the public.

During spring 2022, ODOT invited input from the EMAC on the overall engagement process, survey and discussion group questions, and CBOs to invite for participation in the discussion group. The EMAC met on April 27 and May 26. EMAC also held subcommittee meetings to focus specifically on the draft Low-Income Toll Report.

14.1 Summary of Feedback

The EMAC shared the following key comments to consider in relation to this Project:

- Community Engagement Considerations:
 - Discussion about inclusive and appropriate language to use when referring to “low-income.”
 - Suggestion to partner with Oregon Walks for a future community engagement event.
- Low-Income Toll Report Comments:
 - General support of the analysis and initial identification of equity travel patterns.
 - Interest in balancing larger goals with the daily needs of people in the region, and agreement that the system shouldn’t penalize people who don’t have high incomes.
 - There were suggestions to consider the fluidity of geographic areas before using certain locations to determine eligibility for a low-income program.
 - How discounts will affect revenue allocation from tolling is still to be determined.
- Equity Framework Step One Memo:
 - Concern from some members about tolling interstate trips from Clark County to Portland International Airport.
 - Questions on reducing vehicle-miles traveled without burdening historically excluded and underserved communities.

15 Other Activities

15.1 Briefings

We held several briefings in April and May that focused specifically on the Regional Mobility Pricing Project. The primary objective of the briefings was to share information about tolling in Oregon and to help people understand how tolling projects are connected to the ODOT Urban Mobility Office's priorities and the overall context for Oregon tolling projects. Below summarizes the questions and feedback received at the briefings:

- Interest in more details about diversion including environmental impacts
- Concerns about enforcement
- Questions about how tolling decisions have been and are being made
- Questions about EMAC membership and its role in tolling design and implementation
- Interest in upcoming engagement activities and opportunities for public comment
- Questions about whether ODOT needs additional revenue in light of the 2021 federal infrastructure bill
- Questions about how toll revenue will be allocated
- Concerns about economic impacts tolling may have on the region

15.2 Tabling Events

We hosted two informational booths at two food pantries hosted by Metropolitan Family Services in East Portland in May 2022. The primary objective of the events was to share information about tolling in Oregon. The team handed out fact sheets in English (16), Spanish (18), Chinese (13), Russian (8), and Vietnamese (6). We captured the following questions and feedback during the two events.

- Appreciation for the information, because most people were not aware of tolling coming to Oregon.
- Several people mentioned experience with tolling in Mexico City.
- General concern about tolling and an additional tax.
- Interest in revenue going toward local road improvements.
- Question about how a low-income program would work for non-citizens.

Figure 15-1 Tabling at the Alder Elementary School food pantry.



16 Response to Key Takeaways

As described in Sections 6 through 14, there are concerns and questions about tolling and how it may benefit and affect our communities. We are still in the planning stages for tolling and will do further analysis and refinement of the program as we move into the federal environmental review process.

This section provides a brief response to key takeaways from the spring 2022 engagement, as outlined in the previous sections, and identifies action items to help address these community comments as we continue to develop, define, analyze, and implement tolling along I-5 and I-205.

16.1 General Concern About Tolling

Key Takeaway: Many respondents indicated general opposition to tolls and an interest in paying as little as possible.

Response: We understand that adding a toll to use the highways is a big change. While tolls would be new to the Portland region, they have been used as an effective strategy for managing congestion and funding needed infrastructure in many other parts of the country and worldwide. To help achieve similar goals, the Oregon Legislature directed the OTC in 2017 to pursue and implement tolling I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region.

Traffic in Portland is affecting our quality of life and economy. Hours of delay and traffic congestion come at a high cost to individuals, businesses, and communities. ODOT faces a \$510 million shortfall annually to adequately maintain state-owned bridges and roads. We're taking action, through congestion pricing and other transportation improvements, to keep travelers moving and to fund transportation system investments.

As we continue to develop Oregon toll projects, we want a system that works for the people and businesses in our state and region. This will require a careful balance to ensure the program meets its goal of reducing traffic congestion, while also advancing equity and minimizing community and environmental impacts. The formal environmental review process to study the potential impacts and benefits of tolling is expected to begin in fall 2022. Throughout the process, we'll provide opportunities to share our findings and involve the public, toll advisory groups, and decision-makers to guide the path forward.

ACTION ITEMS

- During the environmental review, study tolling's impact on household budgets and expenses, as well as the expected improvements to travel times and overall traffic congestion, to help people better weigh the costs and benefits of a toll program.
- In partnership with EMAC, identify next steps for implementing equitable solutions for people who are less able to pay a toll, as outlined in the Low-Income Toll Report.
- Convene the Statewide Toll Rulemaking Advisory Committee to review and provide input on a recommended toll rate schedule that effectively manages traffic while minimizing economic, transportation, and community impacts.

16.2 Use of Toll Revenue

Key Takeaway: Mixed opinions emerged on how toll revenue should be used, although roadway safety is a general priority.

Response: A number of guidelines exist (based on past legislative decisions and direction) for how revenue will be used:

- Toll revenue from the I-205 Toll Project is needed to complete construction of the I-205 Improvements Project, including seismic improvements and the extension of a third lane in each direction.
- Toll revenue from the Regional Mobility Pricing Project would support implementation and operation of the toll program, which includes the costs of project-identified mitigation. Revenue could also be used for system maintenance, operations, and modernization of I-5 and I-205.
- The Oregon Constitution (Article IX, Section 3a) specifies that revenues collected from the use or operation of motor vehicles is spent on roadway projects, which could include construction or reconstruction of travel lanes, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities or transit improvements in or along the roadway. In addition, the cost of projects or services needed to address negative effects of tolling could be paid using toll revenue. For example, if a local roadway were made less safe by drivers rerouting to avoid a toll, that roadway could be upgraded with improved sidewalks, bike facilities, and traffic calming measures to discourage rerouting and to preserve neighborhood livability.
- Toll revenue from the Regional Mobility Pricing Project could be an additional source of funding for projects and programs identified in existing planning documents, including the following:
 - Statewide Transportation Improvements Program
 - Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program
 - Regional Transportation Plan
 - Local Agency Transportation System Plans
- The 2022 draft tolling policy amendment to the Oregon Highway Plan provides some guidance on allocating toll revenue. The OTC will consider adopting this amendment to the Oregon Highway Plan by November 2022. For more information and to review the draft policy language, visit the [amendment website](#).

ACTION ITEMS

- Convene the Regional Toll Advisory Committee to help establish criteria to guide allocation of net toll revenue to support projects and programs in existing state, regional, and local planning documents.
- Provide regular information about key tolling decision points by the OTC and identify opportunities for public input.

16.3 Low-income Program and Benefits

Key Takeaway: Support exists for offering low-income benefits to a wide range of people who may be financially affected, including middle-income drivers.

Response: ODOT is concerned with impacts to people experiencing low incomes. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 3055, which directed ODOT to develop a program to address these impacts. In September 2022, ODOT is presenting a Low-Income Toll Report to provide clarity to the OTC, the Oregon Legislature, and community members on how the I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project could address the needs of people experiencing low incomes. The report can be downloaded from the [Tolling Resource Library](#).

These draft options include:

- Provide a significant discount (e.g., credits, free trips, percentage discount, or full exemption) for households equal to or below 200% Federal Poverty Level.
- Provide a smaller, more focused discount (e.g., credits or free trips) for households with incomes above 200% and up to 400% of the Federal Poverty Level.

ACTION ITEMS

- Evaluate and refine an option for a low-income discount program to recommend to the OTC.
- In partnership with EMAC and the Statewide Toll Rulemaking Advisory Committee, work to equitably and successfully implement a low-income discount program.

16.4 Low-income Program Enrollment Process

Key Takeaway: Participants requested a simple and accessible enrollment process for low-income toll benefits that includes customer support and partnerships with CBOs.

Response: The Low-Income Toll Report identifies strategies to reduce barriers to enrollment, based on feedback from social service agencies, CBOs, and the EMAC. Additionally, as part of EMAC's recommendations to advance equity for Oregon toll projects, the EMAC recommends providing ongoing funding for CBOs that serve communities identified in the Oregon Toll Program's Equity Framework and that are affected by tolling. CBOs would then partner with ODOT to support a variety of transportation-related activities, including increasing enrollment among the Oregon Toll Program account holders and access to the low-income toll program.

ACTION ITEMS

- In partnership with EMAC, identify next steps for implementing equitable solutions outlined in the Low-Income Toll Report.

16.5 Transit Options

Key Takeaway: Respondents expressed that transit is not a viable alternative to driving alone and paying a toll unless there are significant improvements to make it more accessible and convenient.

Response: We agree that transit investments are needed. As we continue our work, we are examining the impacts of tolling on transit service plans to develop potential improvements and adjustments to those service plans. We are also coordinating with a working group on transit and multimodal travel options as well as stakeholder advisers to support transit and multimodal travel in Oregon. If enhanced transit/multimodal service is found to be an appropriate mitigation solution, then we can explore the use of toll revenue to fund the solution.

ACTION ITEMS

- Continue to work with transit providers on a transit strategy to enhance transit and other transportation services in areas where there are gaps, especially for historically and currently excluded and underserved communities.
- Convene the Regional Toll Advisory Committee to identify opportunities to improve transit in the region and make recommendations to ODOT.

- Through the environmental review process, identify the potential impact of tolling on transit and if transit/multimodal service is an appropriate mitigation solution.

16.6 Information on Tolling Details

Key Takeaway: Frustration surfaced that information is not yet available about the toll program, especially anticipated toll rates, use of revenues, and expected impacts to surface roads.

Response: We are early in our planning process and understand that as people hear about tolls, they will have many questions about how it will work and how it could affect their lives and neighborhoods. The purpose of the NEPA analysis over the coming year is to help define the proposed project and identify its potential benefits and impacts, so we can better respond to community interests and concerns about the project.

Neither the price of tolls nor the exact times of day the tolls would be collected have been determined. The OTC is the tolling authority that will set and review toll rates, policies, and exemptions/discounts. They will be guided by the State Toll Rulemaking Advisory Group, which will establish rules for setting toll rates based on congestion relief goals, revenue needs, and public input. This process is expected to begin in fall 2022, and meetings and materials will be open to the public. In similar tolling projects from across the country, toll rates are generally set about six months before tolls begin.

The way we will allocate toll revenue will be guided by a variety of rules, requirements, and guidelines. See Section 16.2 for more information.

Since spring 2021, we have heard from thousands of community members about the project and will continue to share information and seek feedback to help shape the project and inform decision-making. Based on feedback from the spring 2022 engagement and previous engagement efforts, as well as input from the Equity Advisory Mobility Committee, the project team has developed a concept to study in the environmental review process, as well as key issues and topics to analyze in detail. During future phases of the project, we will continue to share more information and gather input about the proposed project, including how its benefit and potential impacts on issues like traffic, travel times, and the local economy.

ACTION ITEMS

- Share information through the environmental review process about potential benefits and impacts of tolling on I-5 and I-205.
- Develop and distribute fact sheets to help stakeholders understand the process, decision-makers, and decision points for setting toll rates and allocating toll revenue.

16.7 Effectiveness to Address Congestion

Key Takeaway: Concern that tolling is not the right solution to address congestion.

Response: Congestion pricing is one tool for improving mobility in our region as part of ODOT's Urban Mobility Strategy, which is a cohesive approach to make everyday travel easier, safer, and more efficient.

Tolling has been used effectively in other areas to address congestion. We plan to use variable-rate tolls to manage traffic flow and improve roadway efficiency by charging a higher price during peak traffic periods. "Congestion pricing" or "value pricing" are other terms used frequently when describing this concept. The higher fee encourages some drivers to consider using other travel options (such as carpools or transit), change their travel time to other, less congested times of the day, choose a local destination

that may not require using the highway, or not make the trip at all. If a small percentage of highway users make these choices, it can reduce traffic congestion for those who can't modify their trip and improve traffic flow for the entire system. In the Portland metro region, we are considering a predictable way of tolling where toll rates would vary according to a set schedule so that you would know the cost in advance.

In addition to tolls, ODOT is committed to continuing to work with regional partners to improve safety and invest in transit, walking, and rolling improvements, to make getting around our region accessible and convenient for all modes of travel.

ACTION ITEM

- Through the environmental review process, share and invite comment on modeling results about the potential congestion relief benefits of the proposed project

16.8 Questions About Funding

Key Takeaway: Many questions were asked about why new funding from tolls is needed when ODOT has existing funding sources for roadway and multimodal improvements.

Response: State and federal transportation revenue sources are increasingly insufficient to fund transportation infrastructure needs. ODOT's transportation funding originates from a mix of state (approximately 77%) and federal (approximately 23%) sources. The State Highway Fund relies on a three-pronged approach—the gas tax, weight-mile tax, and driver and motor vehicle fees—and the Federal Highway Trust Fund is funded primarily by federal fuel taxes. These sources have not kept pace with the costs of maintaining Oregon's transportation system or constructing new transportation projects. These state and federal funds have not been adjusted to reflect increasing construction costs, rising inflation, a more fuel-efficient vehicle fleet, and growing transportation infrastructure demand. Especially on the state level, escalating expenditures to maintain aging infrastructure, perform seismic upgrades for state bridges, and complete needed construction have increased financial needs.

Simultaneously, despite recent federal investments in transportation infrastructure including (i.e., the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021), federal funding has not kept pace with rising transportation costs over the last several decades. For example, the federal gas tax has not been adjusted since 1993, and federal funds have been supplemented by increasing state-based contributions, including from sources outside of state fuel taxes.

Compounding the need for additional transportation revenue is Oregon's substantial increase in travel demand as the state experiences population and employment growth, particularly in the Portland metropolitan area. Thus, additional means to generate revenue are required to meet the Portland metropolitan area and greater Oregon transportation needs. ODOT must explore every possible method for maximizing use of its existing infrastructure while developing new, recurring funding sources for future transportation investments. In its plans and policies, ODOT has consistently identified tolling and congestion pricing as important tools to generate needed revenue.

ACTION ITEMS

- Share information related to the need for new revenue sources and provide an opportunity to provide comment on the draft Purpose and Need Statement during scoping.
- Develop additional tools and information to communicate why toll revenue is needed and how it can complement current revenue to improve our transportation system.

- Convene the Statewide Toll Rulemaking Advisory Committee to advise on rules for setting a toll rate schedule through a transparent and accountable process.
- Establish criteria in coordination with the Regional Toll Advisory Committee to guide future allocation of net toll revenue.

16.9 Fairness and Impacts

Key Takeaway: Many respondents said that toll proposals are unfair and strategies are needed to lessen potential toll impacts, especially for communities that rely on I-5 and I-205.

Response: The environmental review process, which is expected to begin in fall 2022, will study the impacts of tolling on surrounding communities. Based on previous engagement, we have compiled a list of topics and community concerns that are important to review. Throughout this phase of the project, there will be many engagement opportunities to share the study results with communities and gather input on the best ways to address and mitigate negative impacts.

ACTION ITEMS

- Through the environmental review process, share study results, invite comments, and identify the best ways to address and mitigate significant negative impacts.

16.10 Decision Process and Public Input

Key Takeaways: Questions and concerns about the decision process to date and how public input will meaningfully shape tolling projects.

Response: The State of Oregon is exploring tolling as part of a comprehensive approach to better manage congestion in the Portland metro region. In 2017, the Oregon Legislature approved House Bill 2017, known as Keep Oregon Moving. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature adopted another bill, HB 3055, which clarified and reinforced the transportation direction from HB 2017. These bills commit hundreds of millions of dollars to projects that will manage traffic congestion and improve the transportation system statewide, including improvements to highways, the freight network, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The bills also directed ODOT to pursue and implement tolling I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region for traffic congestion management and transportation improvements. We are moving forward with this direction.

Over the two years, public input has influenced planning for the I-205 Toll Project alternatives and traffic analysis, extents for tolling on I-5, and establishment of a low-income toll program. Public input received during this time will continue to be considered as tolling decisions are made.

As the project expects to begin the environmental review process in fall 2022, we will continue to study the potential benefits and impacts of tolling. This process will include a formal public comment period, as well as extensive public and stakeholder involvement opportunities to gather input on the proposed project. Decisions about tolling will be made ultimately by the governor-appointed [Oregon Transportation Commission](#).

ACTION ITEMS

- Through the environmental review process, share and gather input on the proposed congestion pricing concept and results from the environmental study.

Spring 2022 Engagement Report

- Convene the Statewide Toll Rulemaking Advisory Committee to advise on rules for setting a toll rate schedule through a transparent and accountable process that incorporates feedback from public engagement.
- Communicate via the website and public meetings when key decisions will be made about tolling, how those decisions will be made, and opportunities for public input leading up to those decisions and how public input influenced the decision.

17 Next Steps

Public and stakeholder comments and input from spring 2022 have informed the Low-Income Toll Report and recommendations developed by the EMAC. ODOT will present the Low-Income Toll Report to the OTC for final approval in September 2022, and then submit the report to the Oregon Legislature. EMAC recommendations were submitted to the OTC in July 2022 and received strong support.

The process to implement a toll program requires substantial analysis, public input, construction, testing and driver education before the system can be operational. Public input received this spring will inform elements of the Regional Mobility Pricing Project to be studied in the environmental review phase as required by NEPA. The formal environmental review is expected to begin in fall 2022. This process will include a formal public comment period, as well as extensive public and stakeholder involvement opportunities to gather input on the proposed project. The earliest tolling could begin under the Regional Mobility Pricing Project is 2025.

Planned ongoing engagement opportunities will include the following:

- Collaboration with engagement of the EMAC.
- Equitable and focused engagement with communities who have been historically and currently excluded and underserved by transportation projects.
- Broad public and community outreach through online engagement events and online tools.
- Briefings and discussions with existing regional policy groups (for example, Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation, Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation).
- Seek input from technical work groups of regional partner agency staff to review methodologies and analytical results that incorporate stakeholder input.
- Ongoing use of the tolling website, email, and voicemail for comments and questions.

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

- **Web:** OregonTolling.org
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