



Board Report

File #: 2019-0083, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

Agenda Number:

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 20, 2019
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 21, 2019**

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO MOTION BY DIRECTOR BUTTS TO AMEND ITEM 43 WITH
QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE report in response to Board Motion 43.1 by Director Butts at the January 2019 Board meeting.

ISSUE

On January 24, 2019, the Board passed Motion 43.1 (Butts, Attachment A), which included questions and instructions for staff to return to the Board with responses in their February report. This Motion was provided in response to staff's continuing response to Motion 4.1, directing the CEO to present a comprehensive funding plan for the "28 x 2028" initiative. This Receive and File Board Report is in response to questions by Director Butts.

BACKGROUND

The Metro Board approved the Twenty-Eight by '28 Initiative project list in January 2018, which includes 28 highway and transit projects totaling \$42.9 billion (YOE) in infrastructure investment, with the goal of completing the projects in time for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In September 2018, Board Motion 4.1 (Solis, Garcetti, Hahn, Butts) directed the CEO to develop a Twenty-Eight by '28 Funding Plan.

In December 2018, Metro CEO Phillip Washington responded to Motion 4.1 by presenting a list of potential strategies that could provide funding to accelerate the delivery of the 28 projects. CEO Washington returned to the Board in January 2019 with staff recommendations on strategies to pursue from the list presented in December. At the January Board meeting, the Board approved Motion 43.1, directing staff to return in February with responses to the questions and instructions posed.

DISCUSSION

Response to Motion 43.1, Questions 1 - 7

1. On Attachment B of the Board Report [File #2019-0011, The Re-Imagining of LA County: Mobility, Equity, and the Environment (Twenty-Eight by '28 Motion Response)], it states that the earliest any revenue realization can happen is 12 to 24 months. Can you further explain in detail the planning and development process for this?

Revenue from congestion pricing cannot be realized until a feasibility study is conducted. The study is necessary to determine where in LA County might make the most sense to test this idea, and what form of pricing (Cordon, Corridor, or VMT) might work best. Given the controversial nature of this concept, a substantial outreach and consensus building period will also be required to build support for testing the idea. Once the feasibility study is completed and the outreach conducted, we will bring back to the Board a staff recommendation regarding where, how, and how long to pilot congestion pricing. Assuming Board approval, it would still take time to get the pilot program up and running. More detail on the anticipated feasibility study process is provided in Attachment B to this receive and file report.

2. Normally a plan like this requires careful planning, analysis and thorough outreach? Is this element part of your 12 to 24 month process?

Analysis, planning, and outreach are critical and essential components of the feasibility study and are included in the study timeline. We are asking the Board to approve moving forward with such a study. We expect the study to take a minimum of 12-24 months, inclusive of a comprehensive outreach component.

3. Is it an accurate assumption that you would want to hire consultant experts to lead a study of this magnitude-is the procurement process included as part of the 12 to 24 month process?
 - a. Instruct the CEO to bring forward a schedule on the program approach that details the tasks to be performed during the 12-24 months

We would need to hire consultants to assist us with the feasibility study, but Metro would lead the study. The procurement process for this initial consultant is included as part of the 12-24 months timeline. Attachment B provides a draft initial scope of work highlighting the key tasks to be performed over the next 24 months.

We propose the following timeline and key activities to develop and implement congestion pricing in LA County, if the Board approves both the feasibility study and ultimately moves forward with a pilot. Note that these activities are not meant to be sequential as many of them will need to be undertaken simultaneously.

Immediate & Ongoing	2019 - 2020	Late 2020	To Be Determined
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Community and public engagement	• Feasibility Study • Partnership and legislative authority	• Pilot Implementation • Initial Revenue Generation	• Expansion • Additional Revenue Generation
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4. In Attachment B [File #2019-0011, The Re-Imagining of LA County: Mobility, Equity, and the Environment (Twenty-Eight by '28 Motion Response)] you propose that a ten-year estimate can generate up to \$134 billion in revenues if you add up all the congestion pricing options. How did you arrive at the estimate for these revenues?

To clarify, each congestion pricing model in Attachment B included a 10-year estimate of potential revenue generation for each model. These models are not intended to be considered in total; Metro would likely choose one, not all of them. Moreover, these are initial estimates based on very rough assumptions. The 10-year estimates for cordon pricing and VMT pricing are based on scenarios from SCAG estimates. The 10-year estimate of revenue generation for corridor pricing is derived from annual VMT estimates. An objective of the feasibility study is to provide an in-depth analysis of revenue potential for a variety of timelines and congestion pricing models, including a ten-year estimate.

5. In the same attachment you state you can realize savings by exploring Public-Private Partnership opportunities. What other alternatives have you examined besides Public-Private Partnerships as a means to save project costs?

Metro is always looking for ways to reduce costs on major capital projects. Value engineering will always be a priority to keep projects within budget. Cost savings from P3 are largely based on innovations from the private sector and reduced operations and maintenance costs over the life of the assets. The cost certainty of a P3 arrangement allows us to better predict our operations and maintenance needs over time. However, any cost reductions or savings should not be regarded as a meaningful revenue stream to accelerate projects. Other ways to save project costs are to limit the addition of out-of-scope items, reduce project scope, and look at phasing of projects.

6. Will the Feasibility Studies include exploring new technology, such as monorail or other technology that can significantly reduce project costs and timelines compared to traditional 100 year-old technology like underground heavy rail or light rail?

The feasibility studies in this case are oriented towards congestion pricing and Transportation Network Company regulation. Any new transit services resulting from these studies would likely be shorter turn-around items such as buses to deploy in a given area on newly free-flowing lanes, or additional rail cars to supplement service. That said, new technologies such as monorail may be under consideration during corridor studies for Measure M projects. For example, this technology is being considered for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor.

7. How will the NextGen Program fit into the scenarios described in Item 43.

NextGen is a critical program that will seek to re-design our entire bus network. Congestion pricing, on the other hand, will initially be a pilot program in one specific area of LA County. New bus

services, in addition to NextGen, are likely to be a critical part of any congestion pricing pilot program. If and when such a program is implemented, this might create additional changes in the Metro bus network. Metro staff will work to integrate these changes with NextGen as it is rolled out.

Monitoring Other Congestion Pricing Activities in California

Motion 43.1 also asked Metro staff to monitor both the State of California's Road Charge Program for synergistic opportunities and the City of San Francisco's Congestion Pricing projects for lessons learned. As part of the research proposed for the Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study, these two efforts will be documented in addition to other pricing models around the world, including pricing approach, performance measures, outcomes, and trends over time.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Congestion pricing offers a compelling mobility solution that can also generate substantial revenues that can be used for transit operations and capital construction. If the Board approves moving forward with a Feasibility Study to assess the potential mobility, equity, and environmental benefits of congestion pricing, the cost center manager will be responsible for budgeting the funds to conduct the full scope of the study as described in this Motion response.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 1.3 of the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan conveys our agency's intentions to manage transportation demand in a fair and equitable manner by 1) developing simplified, sustainable and comprehensive pricing policies to support the provision of equitable, affordable, and high-quality transportation services and 2) testing and implementing pricing strategies to reduce traffic congestion. The initiation of a feasibility study and advisory board for congestion pricing, with the intention of creating a pilot program, is the first step in delivering on this goal.

NEXT STEPS

Metro staff will ask the Board to approve the recommended strategies to include in a funding plan to Re-Imagine LA County. If the Board approves the recommended strategies, which include conducting a congestion pricing feasibility study, staff will develop and issue a Request for Proposals for a congestion pricing feasibility study as described in Attachment B.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion 43.1

Attachment B - Preliminary Scope for Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study

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Board Report

File #: 2019-0033, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

Agenda Number:

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2019**

Motion by:

BUTTS

Related to Item 43: The Re-Imagining of LA County: Mobility, Equity, and the Environment (Twenty-Eight by '28 Motion Response)

I have a number of questions related to the Board report and several instructions pertinent to the Issues before us and would like to amend Item 43 and would like to have staff return to the Board with their responses to the Questions in their February Report.

Questions

1. On Attachment B of the Board report, it states that the earliest any revenue realization can happen is 12 to 24 months. Can you further explain in detail the planning and development process for this?
2. Normally a plan like this requires careful planning, analysis and thorough outreach? Is this element part of your 12 to 24 month process?
3. Is it an accurate assumption that you would want to hire consultant experts to lead a study of this magnitude - is the procurement process included as part of the 12 to 24 month process?
 - a) **Instruct** the CEO to bring forward a schedule on the program approach that details the tasks to be performed during the 12-24 months?
4. In Attachment B you propose that a ten-year estimate can generate **up to** \$134 billion in revenues if you add up all the congestion pricing options. How did you arrive at the estimate for these revenues?
5. In the same attachment you state you can realize savings by exploring Public-Private-Partnership opportunities. What other alternatives have you examined besides Public-Private Partnerships as a means to save project costs?
6. Will the Feasibility Studies include exploring new technology, such as monorail or other technology that can significantly reduce project costs and timelines compared to traditional 100 year-old

technology like underground heavy rail or light rail? AND

7. How will the NexGen Program fit into the scenarios described in Item 43?

Instructions

- A. Direct Metro Staff to return to the Board with information pertaining to the Scope, the proposed Budget and Study Timeline prior to conducting the Feasibility Studies for a Congestion Pricing Pilot strategy;
- B. The CEO shall bring forward a schedule on the program approach that details the tasks to be performed during the 12-24 months?
- C. Monitor the State's Road Charge Program for potential synergistic opportunities and monitor the City of San Francisco's Congestion Pricing projects for potential lessons learned.
- D. The proposed "Sacred Items" for Approval before are subject to future Review and Revision if circumstances arise where the Board feels such Review and Revision is warranted; and

I, Therefore, Move that the Board submit these questions and approve the list of Instructions to the CEO and prepare specific responses to the questions for incorporation in their Report at the Executive Management Committee in February.

Attachment B: Initial Scope for Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study

Executive Summary

The current transportation system in Los Angeles is highly inequitable, provides limited mobility, and is damaging our environment. Congestion pricing, if implemented effectively, can be a method of dramatically improving **equity, mobility, and environmental** outcomes to achieve Metro’s strategic goals in the near-term, while also providing revenues for long-term capital projects. The potential public policy benefits are shown in parentheses below and summarized in Table 1.

With a little encouragement from pricing, often less than we might think, people will find it more attractive to:

- Travel during less congested times (mobility)
- Use other modes, such as public transportation, walk, bicycle (environment)
- Consolidate their trips (mobility)
- Share rides/carpool (equity)

Those who continue to drive alone will be able to:

- Enjoy greater certainty and speed in their travel times (mobility)
- Pay less in total gasoline or other fuel (environment)
- Enjoy cleaner air and reduced contribution to climate change (environment)

Revenues from congestion pricing can:

- Offset cost for low income-drivers (equity)
- Be reinvested to improve the quality, reliability, safety, and convenience of transit service (equity, mobility)
- Provide free or low-cost transit fares (equity)
- Supplement funding gap of delivering 28x2028 projects (mobility)

We propose the following timeline and key activities to develop and implement congestion pricing in LA County. Note that these activities are not meant to be sequential as many of them will need to be undertaken simultaneously.

Immediate & Ongoing	2019 - 2020	Late 2020	To Be Determined
Community and public engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feasibility Study• Partnership and legislative authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pilot Implementation• Initial Revenue Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expansion• Additional Revenue Generation

Next steps for exploring congestion pricing:

- Begin conducting genuine public and community engagement, starting with an equity lens at the beginning of the process, using Metro’s Equity Platform as a guide and inviting a diverse range of participants to have a voice in this process.

- Procure consultant services to conduct a feasibility study to identify best locations for proof of concept.

Table 1. Anticipated Outcomes and Public Policy Benefits

Anticipated Outcomes	Equity	Mobility	Environment
Revenues are reinvested to improve the quality, reliability, safety, and convenience of transit service and walking and biking access.	x	x	
Revenues offset toll cost for low-income drivers.	x		
Reduction in road congestion leads to improved air quality along corridors.	x		x
Transit moves faster through less congested lanes, and transit customers pay no additional charge for better service.	x	x	
Revenues can pay for free or low-cost transit fares.	x		
Shared riders and carpoolers pay less than people who drive alone.	x		
Drivers in priced lanes pay less for fuel since they are not idling in traffic.			x
Revenues can supplement funding gap of delivering 28x2028 projects.		x	
Drivers enjoy greater certainty and speed in their travel times.		x	
Drivers are encouraged to drive during less congested times, or to mode shift to non-SOV driving (e.g. carpooling, public transportation, walking, bicycling), which enables the current system to accommodate more person throughput.		x	
Encourages consolidation and reduction of driving trips. This in turn reduces congestion.		x	

Background and Justification

The concept of congestion pricing has been around for decades. Simple supply and demand tells us that when something is provided for free, people use more of it than they would otherwise. Hence, we have significant roadway congestion when that space is provided with no out-of-pocket costs.

Currently, the price of road (usually zero) bears little relationship to demand for that road at that time. For example, it costs the same to use a road at 3am as it does in the peak of rush hour traffic, even though demand for roads is much lower at 3am. The net effect is that instead of paying for roadway space with money, everyone pays with their time.

People waste time sitting in traffic, essentially waiting in line, to use roads. This vastly inefficient method of allocating roadway space may seem very democratic, in the sense that all must pay with their time. However, it actually discriminates against the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. Transit riders, who have far lower incomes than non-riders in Los Angeles County, use buses that sit in the same slow traffic and face longer commute times on average. Moreover, low-income people typically have less flexible work schedules with hourly wages and face severe penalties for lateness. Whereas higher-income individuals may be able to shift their travel times or work from home to avoid congested periods, lower-income people often cannot.

Finally, many working class individuals depend on their vehicle for day labor and cannot use transit alternatives. When their vehicles sit in traffic they miss out on potential jobs and their earning potential drops dramatically. While they might have to pay to a fee during congested times if congestion pricing were to be implemented, they would likely more than make up for this fee through time savings and being able to perform more work. Under the current system, they are severely limited in the number of jobs they can perform in a day.

Congestion Pricing Today

Congestion pricing has proven challenging to implement for reasons such as lack of political viability, technical and privacy concerns, and equity concerns. Despite these challenges, a number of metropolitan areas have implemented various forms of congestion pricing. Once implemented, these schemes have had various degrees of success and, notably, none have ever been repealed. This includes the only congestion pricing pilot of any kind implemented to date in Los Angeles County, Metro's ExpressLanes Program.

More comprehensive congestion pricing schemes are currently in place in London, Stockholm, Singapore, and Milan. Each of these experiences offers lessons learned, but perhaps most notable is Stockholm. In this city, the congestion pricing scheme was widely opposed and was put in place on a pilot basis. After the trial period, the scheme proved so popular that it was accepted permanently. This demonstrates the value of a pilot period to test such a product, and to demonstrate its value, before casting judgment.

Congestion Pricing Models and Revenue Forecasts

UCLA analyzed eight active congestion programs in the United States and worldwide. In each case, the program generates surplus revenue. Across the eight programs, the operating cost-to-revenue ratio averaged 36 percent, suggesting that program revenues substantially exceed costs, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Congestion Pricing Programs: Cost and Revenue Estimates

City/Program	Status	Initial Investment	Annual Operating Costs	Annual Net Revenue	Efficiency (Costs/Revenue)
Oslo, Norway	<i>active</i>	USD \$30M	USD \$11M	USD \$70M	16%
Singapore	<i>active</i>	USD \$145M	USD \$25M	USD \$110M	23%
London, UK	<i>active</i>	USD \$211M	USD \$170M	USD \$179M	95%
Stockholm, Sweden	<i>active</i>	USD \$222M	USD \$12M	USD \$144M	8%
Dubai, UAE	<i>active</i>	n/a	n/a	USD \$217M	n/a
Milan, Italy	<i>active</i>	€7M	€7M	€29.4M	24%
Gothemberg, Sweden	<i>active</i>	USD \$84M	USD \$12M	USD \$89M	13%
San Francisco, USA	<i>active</i>	\$56.3M	\$944M	\$1.3B	72%
Singapore	<i>active</i>	S \$6.6M	S \$5M	S \$47M	11%
Manchester, UK	<i>proposed</i>	\$195M	\$55M	\$140M	39%
Netherlands	<i>proposed</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
New York City, USA - Variable Price	<i>proposed</i>	\$265M	\$150M		9%
New York City, USA - Variable Tolls	<i>proposed</i>	\$282M	\$110M	\$2.2B	5%

Sources available upon request

In Los Angeles, there are three conceivable ways congestion pricing could be implemented. These are the following:

- 1) *Cordon Pricing*. This involves creating a boundary around a central district and then charging vehicles to cross that boundary. The fee can be variable, meaning it can go up or down based on demand. Alternatively it could be set at a specific rate for peak times. Either way, the idea is to reduce the number of vehicles entering a central area when demand is higher. This is the most common method of congestion pricing employed around the world.

Cordon pricing is most effective when there is a strong Central Business District (CBD) with high quality mass transit options as alternatives to driving. Los Angeles County does not have a typical CBD, as job centers are more dispersed throughout the region. Preliminary average revenues from cordon pricing of all trips entering downtown LA have been estimated to be as high as \$1.2 billion per year (in year of expenditure dollars). This form of pricing is among the easiest to implement and has the most history from which we can learn.

- 2) *VMT Pricing*. Charging drivers based on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) has been floated for many years as a potential substitute for a gas tax. However, a VMT fee platform can potentially be used to charge variable prices based on location and time of day. The platform could conceivably charge zero when there is no traffic or in uncongested areas, but then charge high enough rates during peak times to deter overuse. There have been VMT-fee experiments in California, Oregon, and Iowa. While none of these pilots have attempted to include additional fees for congestion, the Oregon pilot tested the idea by calculating the number of miles driven in the “congestion zone”. In short, the technology

exists to use VMT as a method of alleviating congestion but it has not yet been attempted due to political challenges.

Preliminary average annual revenues from implementing VMT pricing have been estimated at \$10.35 billion per year (in year of expenditure dollars) for the larger metropolitan area. While net revenues from Los Angeles County alone would be less, Los Angeles County is the most populous part of the region and accounts for more VMT than the rest of the region. This estimate provides a sense of the strong revenue potential of such a scheme.

- 3) *Corridor Pricing.* Corridor pricing is a new kind of congestion pricing that has not been implemented anywhere. The idea is to price all lanes on all roads within a specific corridor with high traffic congestion but a viable public transit alternative. Functioning similar to cordon pricing, anyone traveling within a designated corridor during peak times would pay a fee based on how many miles they travel within the corridor. The price for travel within the corridor would be set high enough to ensure free flow traffic within that entire corridor.

Absolute revenues vary greatly, largely because the tolled areas vary considerably in their size and the demand for the road space they allocate.

Detailed Plan

People widely perceive the biggest transportation problem in Los Angeles County to be congestion. And it is true that congestion is worse here than it is almost anywhere else.¹ Additionally, LA County today is hampered by deep income inequality.² Our current transportation system exacerbates economic inequity and disproportionately harms low-income people, such as in the following ways:

- Congestion exacerbates vehicular air pollution, which has been linked to health problems ranging from cancer to asthma to preterm birth, and it most affects people living near congested roads---who are disproportionately likely to have lower incomes.³
- Congestion slows down buses, increases trip time, and creates an inconvenient and unreliable trip experience for passengers. Buses serve over 70% of Metro's transit passengers. The average annual household income of bus passengers is \$26,812, with 56% living below the poverty line.⁴
- Congestion creates transportation inefficiencies that limit access to the most basic needs in life, such as jobs, housing, education, and health care. Wealthy individuals have the means to overcome these inefficiencies to a much greater extent than low-income people.

¹ <http://inrix.com/press-releases/scorecard-2017/>

² PolicyLink and USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity. "An Equity Profile of the Los Angeles Region". https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/EquityProfile_LA_Region_2017_Summary_Final.pdf

³ Manville, Michael. "Is congestion pricing fair to the poor?" 100 Hours. <https://medium.com/100-hours/is-congestion-pricing-fair-to-the-poor-62e281924ca3>

⁴ Metro June 2018 On-Board Customer Satisfaction Survey: http://media.metro.net/projects_studies/research/images/annual_survey_results/bus_results_spring_2018.pdf

Access to high-quality transportation is directly related to our region’s future and its long-term economic prosperity. Better access to high-quality transportation means safe and convenient access to the basic needs in people’s lives, such as job opportunities, housing, education, and health services— all of which contribute to stronger communities.

Metro’s Equity Platform is grounded in making access to opportunity a key objective in public decision-making, public investment, and public service. Researchers from the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity describe transportation equity as:

1. Equitable access to quality, affordable transportation options and, therefore, employment, services, amenities, and cultural destinations;
2. Shared distribution of the benefits (e.g., jobs) and burdens (e.g., pollution) of transportation systems and investments; and
3. Partnership in the planning process that results in shared decision-making and more equitable outcomes for disadvantaged communities, while also strengthening the entire region.⁵

We can provide faster and more equitable transportation options for everyone. To do so, we need to simultaneously address both the supply and demand sides of transportation: the need to supply more and better high-quality transportation alternatives to solo driving and the equally important need to manage the demand for more travel. A congestion pricing pilot program would be structured around this concept. The following outlines the recommended timeline and key activities for developing and implementing a pilot program, which if successful could be expanded to more areas of the County. Note that these activities are not meant to be sequential as many of them will need to be undertaken simultaneously.

Immediate and Ongoing: Community and Public Engagement

Throughout the development and implementation timeline, we will develop grass-roots support for this initiative through extensive community and public engagement and outreach. Outreach would mean going into some of the communities facing the greatest traffic congestion and working through potential solutions. This way, when a proposed pilot area emerges, there can be support for the project. During the feasibility study, we will establish multiple forums and methods for meaningfully engaging with communities, such as in-person and virtual meetings, pop-ups, social media platforms, surveys, and a variety of other methods specific to the context and needs of different communities. Outreach will also focus on understanding how best to implement equity programs to subsidize low-income drivers to provide fair access and to collect data on public perceptions and outcomes to inform the feasibility study and implementation.

2019 - 2020: Feasibility Study, Partnership and Legislative Authority

⁵ Carter, Vanessa; Manuel, Pastor; Wander, Madeline. *An Agenda for Equity: A Framework for Building A Just Transportation System in Los Angeles County, Executive Summary*. USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, Nov. 2013.

https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/Executive_Summary_Agenda_for_Equity_PERE_A.pdf

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has studied congestion pricing in the SCAG region extensively in the past. Metro can build off the knowledge and lessons learned from SCAG as well as explore new approaches through a feasibility study. The Metro study would be conducted with the goal of determining the best potential location and structure for a congestion pricing pilot in LA County.

A key component of the study is that it will not just propose an area where pricing could be piloted – it will propose all of the necessary public transit improvements that will need to accompany that pilot. New transportation options that can be implemented quickly and effectively, such as new local bus routes, transit priority features, express buses, microtransit, Transportation Network Company partnerships, bicycle or other shared mobility options, or other innovative strategies to provide high-quality mobility options would be developed with community input. The study would recommend a slate of transportation improvements specifically designed to provide an alternative to driving during congested times. These improvements would be considered as an essential component of the proposed pilot.

The study would include the impacts of free public transit in the same corridor to determine whether that is worth offering as an added benefit. Free transit would provide even greater incentive for people to avoid driving on roads through the priced area, potentially lowering the congestion fee and improving mobility. It would also bring a transportation subsidy to those who need it the most in our society, improving equity in accessibility.

The study would need to include analysis informed by community engagement to determine how best to compensate those who are potentially disadvantaged by pricing in the pilot area. Most travelers are likely to be better off. For those who can afford the fee, they will be able to travel much faster during peak times. For those who cannot afford or choose not to pay the fee, they will also be able to travel faster if they are able to travel at alternate times, take public transit that now flows faster, or use other transportation options.

The groups potentially negatively affected are those who must travel at peak times, are low-income, and for whom no viable transportation substitute exists. Our ongoing outreach efforts will work to identify the magnitude of these groups and how best to deliver equity programs to subsidize these drivers. These individuals could be compensated by revenues from congestion pricing. Compensation payouts can be delivered to qualifying individuals any number of ways, each of which would need to be explored in this study.

As the area for a potential pilot becomes clear, Metro will need to develop and solidify critical partnerships necessary for delivering the project. Government partners will include cities affected by the pilot (which may not be limited to the pilot area), SCAG, Caltrans, the California Transportation Commission (CTC), and the Federal Highway Administration. Other helpful partners could include new mobility providers such as Uber and Lyft (who are generally supportive of congestion pricing), local businesses that may be affected, auto clubs, the academic community, issue-based non-profits like Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and community-based organizations. Together with these partners, we would need to seek legislative authority at the state level, and regulatory authority at the federal level, to conduct the pilot.

Metro would seek to establish an advisory group to provide input to the feasibility study as it moved forward, and to assist in developing legislative authority. This group would meet regularly to review progress of the study and develop action items to improve progress. The group would include academic experts in congestion pricing, community groups, non-profits, agency representatives, and business leaders.

Late 2020: Pilot Implementation

With the area and form of congestion pricing selected, along with accompanying transit services, the next step would be to launch the pilot for a period of time that is sufficient to evaluate its effectiveness. Previous congestion pricing programs have generally proven to be unpopular prior to implementation, but popular following implementation. The pilot would need to be implemented with specific performance metrics that are agreed to by the affected populations, along with a promise to suspend the pilot if those metrics are not being met after a certain period of time.

Once the pilot program begins, revenues will be realized immediately. However, the associated transit improvements in the pilot area must be in place before or at the same time that pricing begins. This will likely require borrowing funds in anticipation of pricing revenues in order to purchase additional vehicles, create bus/bike lanes, or compensate/subsidize low-income individuals negatively affected by the pilot program. Some portion of realized revenue will need to be allocated towards repaying the debt incurred and the ongoing cost of supplemental transit operations, and some will need to be allocated towards keeping the roads in the pilot area in a state of good repair. The rest can be dedicated towards long-term transit projects in the pilot area.

To be determined as warranted: Expansion

If the pilot proves successful, other areas of the County will likely demand similar programs. With lessons learned from the existing pilot and infrastructure already in place for pricing, it will be possible to create new zones more rapidly. It will be easiest to expand outward from the initial pilot zone, though it may make sense to create other new zones as well. It is through expansion to new areas that the greatest revenue realization will occur. Areas that desire more long-term transit investment will likely be among the first to seek a congestion zone.

Conclusion

Metro's 10-year strategic plan, Vision 2028, was adopted by the Metro Board on June 28, 2018. Goal 1.3 of the strategic plan conveys our agency's intentions to manage transportation demand in a fair and equitable manner by 1) developing simplified, sustainable and comprehensive pricing policies to support the provision of equitable, affordable, and high-quality transportation services and 2) testing and implementing pricing strategies to reduce traffic congestion. The initiation of a feasibility study and advisory board for congestion pricing, with the intention of creating a pilot program, is the first step in delivering on this goal.