

## Triangle Strategic Tolling Study

### Compilation of Comments (09/17/19)

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#### Email Responses

Toll roads are incredibly annoying. I'll randomly get some bill for \$2 that I have to take the time to pay. I rarely intend to take a toll road and try to avoid them whenever possible. Please do not make any more toll roads in this area.

Thanks for your time,  
Arton Ragsdale, Durham

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Here is a question. Why not set up a toll booth on 95 or 85 near VA and tax the people coming into our state instead of taxing the local traffic. Its not going to fix the congestion issues because the area is not built with infrastructure to accommodate the amount of growth already. Duke already squandered the light rail idea because, well all know, they didn't want poor and ethnic minority people and students to travel via more affluent areas. We know the issues they gave made no common sense.

An even better thing would be to use the middle of the highway system and do a light rail elevated above traffic! Charge for that to ride like a bus system. That would also decrease traffic if those kinds of dramatic and progressive solutions would be available or planned! It would also provide an income for the city and general areas. Please don't do a toll on the local people. We are already taxed too much.

Have a great day,

Elise Dickinson

Durham NC

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Andrew,

I am providing feedback on the strategic tolling study. I am in support of toll lanes if they will speed construction of additional capacity on existing highways which are at or over capacity. In particular, we need additional capacity on NC-147, I-40, and US-70 in Durham and Wake Counties. Of course I would prefer the lanes to be without a toll, but we cannot afford to wait for additional capacity on these clogged arteries. Toll lanes are paid for by people who use them so people who don't use them do not have to pay for them. This seems fair and equitable. I am OK with additional incentives to make the additional capacity more equitable for people of lesser means. Thank you for consideration.

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Joshua

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Hi Mr. Henry,

In regard to the Triangle Strategic Tolling Study, I have the following comments:

- Tolloed lanes are a waste of resources. The extra expense involved in adding, operating and enforcing tolloed lanes produce marginal overall impact on congestion and take decades to pay back, if ever. Proven alternatives like general purpose lanes or minor improvements such as auxiliary lanes between interchanges, signal improvements and ramp meters can have a real & immediate impact that helps everyone.

- Tolloed lanes are a waste of resources. On a recent trip to I took to Atlanta on I-75, traffic on the general use lanes was stop and roll, The adjacent toll lanes were virtually empty, with roughly 5 cars a minute going by. What good is multi-million dollar toll highway investment that people won't use?

- Tolloed lanes will make general purpose highway improvements or transit alternatives more expensive. Once built, the toll lanes are a multi-decade commitment taking up median or shoulder space that could have been used for general purpose lanes or rail transit, making either option even more expensive and less likely to occur.

- Tolloed lanes will make general purpose lanes more dangerous. I noted in the study that one way to make 'space' for the toll lanes is to narrow the general purpose lanes and the shoulders. Reducing lane width or shoulder space will make the general purpose lanes noticeably more dangerous, resulting in more accidents and congestion and endangering the general public.

- Tolloed lanes result in 2 classes of drivers - the well-to-do who can afford the tolls and everyone else who is stuck in the inadequate general purpose lanes.

For all these reasons, I oppose the move toward toll lanes on Triangle highways. I encourage you to consider what is best for the general public and what makes the most economic sense for the most people - not just the 1% cruising along the toll lanes. There are cheaper alternatives that would be available to all drivers. As gas tax revenue falls, there are funding alternatives available such as an annual mileage fee based on the miles driven per year, with the data already captured during the annual safety inspection.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Todd Patton

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Andy,

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I've read the draft Triangle Tolling Study and plan to submit written comments and present them at the public hearing on the 11th. I was wondering if you have time next Thursday to talk about the genesis of the study and where the staff thinks this is likely to lead. I also have some time on Tuesday.

So that you have a heads up on what I'm thinking, here are my primary points. First, it looks like the only goal that is being addressed is congestion reduction. I will advocate that the two other goals that should be addressed are VMT reduction and improved equity of the transportation system. Second, the study does not seem to consider the option of introducing congestion pricing for some or all existing lanes, in advance of adding lanes. Third, the study dismisses equity concerns by stating that examples from other facilities indicate that drivers of all incomes use the priced lanes. This doesn't really address whether the investment advances equity in the transportation system.

Again, I'd like to learn more about the background of the study before submitting comments.

Thanks,

John

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Hi Andrew,

Thanks to you and your colleagues for putting forth this toll study. As someone who travels on 147 daily, I can definitely see the benefit in adding toll lanes (on 147 but also other routes).

That being said, I tend to think of improvements in bus routes/development of bus rapid transit as the priority for our region, now that the light rail project has met its unfortunate demise. I only read the executive summary of the toll summary, so I may have missed this somewhere: but are the two MPOs planning to work on this toll lane project in conjunction with developing stronger public transit options?

Thanks and have a great long weekend!

Sadie

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Don't have a comment on anything specific in the study but wanted to email to say I am **very supportive** of an increase in toll lanes in the triangle, especially if (at the very least) some of the funds raised go towards improved public transportation options around the triangle.

Patrick

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I have lived in the triangle for almost 15 years. Previously I lived in NJ, and although I don't mind tolls, I feel they are just not needed in NC. The 540 experiment should tell you that. The idea of paying a car tax, which I had always assumed was a way to pay for roads in lieu of tolls, is not ideal but I am fine with it since I figured that roads could be payed for that way. When 540 rolled around, and it became a toll road, I knew it would not be used enough. It is the highest cost per mile road in the country. I know people that would use the road much more if the tolls weren't so expensive.

I feel like setting up tolls on the roads that were studied is going to have the opposite effect that you are trying to relieve. Personally, I feel as though the area is getting more congested as the years go by. By adding express toll lanes you will be condensing the traffic further while the people that use the lanes will not alleviate the issue of traffic. You are talking maybe at best 10% usage, more along the lines of 3-5% usage. To me that seems like a waste of time and money.

In short, I beg of the committee to not use tolls in the area. I know that my lone voice won't have much of an impact, however, I feel as though this would make the problem so much worse. Not to mention cost the community money that we don't have right now.

Sincerely

Michael Levine

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September 8, 2019

Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO Board members and staff:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on this Draft Triangle Tolling Study. I think that it is important that the MPOs and NCDOT have begun exploring how pricing might be used to achieve our transportation goals in the Triangle. I understand that this study is intended to be a “table-setting” document that provides information about a range of issues associated with tolling. While there is much valuable information, I see several shortcomings.

First, it appears that the only goal that is being addressed is congestion relief for drivers (Goal IV. Manage Congestion and System Reliability from 2045 MTP). All other goals, such as improving transit reliability, and even promoting carpooling (one of the objectives of the congestion relief goal) are presented only as issues to consider. This appears to elevate the goal of congestion relief for drivers to one of primacy above the other goals, even if that is not intended.

I recommend that the MPO Board develop a statement of principles regarding tolling prior to the consideration of any projects in the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The statement of principles would give staff, and parties such as NCDOT or the NC Turnpike Authority, clarity about what outcomes are to be evaluated and presented prior to MPO Board endorsement of a tolling project. In particular, I would urge consideration of how a tolling project should affect vehicle miles travelled, the access impacts for residents of low-income and minority communities, and the opportunity costs if the project’s revenues will not offset costs.

Second, the study does not seem to consider the option of introducing congestion pricing for some or all existing lanes, only tolling of additional lanes. Converting existing lanes to priced lanes can be a targeted solution at managing the demand for single-occupant driving in a corridor during congested times of day, while allowing for a system that could offset impacts on low-income travelers, at a cost that could be fully borne by the driver fees. This strategy would require more coordination with FHWA, and a long community conversation. The potential benefits suggest that it should not be dismissed before consideration.

I recommend that the MPO Board set an expectation for staff and partners at NCDOT and the NC Turnpike Authority that any further analysis of tolling projects will fully evaluate options to introduce pricing on existing lanes that would not require construction of additional lanes.

Third, the study addresses equity concerns by referring to examples from other facilities which indicate that drivers of all incomes use the priced lanes. This doesn't really address whether the investment advances equity in the transportation system. On a project-level, it is important to consider how the benefits of decreased travel times or greater reliability in travel time in a priced facility compares with the costs of using the facility to users of different income levels. While a driver traveling to a minimum wage job may choose to use a priced facility, if that person must pay the same price as a driver traveling to a \$75,000 salaried job, there is a very different impact on the finances of the two individuals. Further, from a system-level, the choice about which transportation projects or corridors should be funded with tax dollar investments will usually have an equity impact since users of different incomes don't typically use all facilities proportionately. If a tolling project is not going to pay for itself through the driver fees, then there are opportunity costs that should be considered from an equity perspective.

I recommend that the MPO Board direct the staff to develop methodologies for evaluating the equity impacts of future investments in the transportation system prior to moving forward with any tolling projects, and in conjunction with the development of the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Triangle Tolling Study.

Sincerely,

John Tallmadge  
Durham, NC

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I've been waiting for the other shoe to fall every since the rapid transit was cancelled and now this is it. The exchange for a rapid transit system is now toll roads!!! No, No, No toll roads in the Durham - Chapel Hill - Carboro area. This is a poor substitute for a rapid transit train system. The gas tax money collected should be returned to the citizens in the county. What faith would I have that officials that were suppose to be pugged in the institutional professionals in the area are better positioned now than before with the rapid transit system? How can someone be confident that Duke is going to have some last minute study that states the increased traffic will harm their research at the last minute when any engineer worth his or her salt should have checked vibrations in the area way prior to developing a route. No,No,No toll roads with tax payer funding.

Wayland Burton

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## Facebook Responses



**Susan Marisa Gore Vitellaro** When they tolked 504 it was a TRAVESTY - and the rates are OUTRAGEOUS - NO MORE TOLLS.

Like · Reply · Message · 2d



**Susan Marisa Gore Vitellaro** THEY AREN'T ASKING OPINIONS, THEY WILL JUST DO IT.

Like · Reply · Message · 2d



Milestone Follower

**Mary Molina** NO TOLLS - DURHAM LOST \$160 MILLION ON THE LIGHT RAIL TRAVESTY - OH HELL NO ON THE TOLLS!

Like · Reply · Message · 2d



**Mark Leedom** I'm pretty sure we already pay taxes for roads, so no toll roads please.

Like · Reply · Message · 1d