

Triangle Strategic Tolling Study

Statement of Principles (draft 09/25/19)

The purpose of the Triangle Strategic Tolling Study is to develop a strategy for the use of express toll lanes to benefit all travelers regardless of travel mode, residential and employment location, and income level. In a fast growing urban area, implementing toll express lanes has several advantages over the addition of general purpose lanes. Toll lanes provide the option for toll users and transit riders to experience a faster, more reliable travel time, and an opportunity to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles. However, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) is concerned that lower-income persons may be unable to afford the tolls and may lack the financial tools to access the payment system. In addition, transit users may not directly benefit from toll lanes, and the growth in vehicle miles traveled per capita, which adds to greenhouse gas emissions, might continue to increase.

In order to address these equity and environmental concerns, the DCHC MPO will incorporate the following set of principles in its evaluation of express toll lanes:

Income and Economic Equity

- Conduct outreach activities with lower-income households to fully understand the effects, both real and perceived, of toll lanes on lower-income travelers, and address these effects in the detailed planning, design and implementation of toll lanes.
- Study and consider implementing subsidy options for lower-income users.
- Remove financial tool barriers to the toll system by permitting, for example, cash toll accounts and eliminating account maintenance fees for lower-income users.

Transit and Multimodal Transportation

- Permit bus transit providers free use of the toll lanes.
- Dedicate a portion of toll revenues to improve transit service in the corridor.
- Dedicate a portion of toll revenues to implement other transportation improvements within the corridor.
- Coordinate toll facilities and adopted transit plans to incorporate features such as bus access points, park-and-ride lots and bus stations.

Environment

- Set tolling policy to create incentives for increased car-pooling and van-pooling, and closely coordinate that policy with employer, university, local government and institutional commuter programs.

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Statement of Principles (continued)

Programming

- If the construction of express toll lanes requires conventional local, state or federal funding in addition to the toll revenues, this will be a factor in the MPO's evaluation of the toll lane project. A subsidy like this would only be justified if the project includes a strong benefit to transit or other modes.

Regional Cooperation

- Coordinate the implementation of these principles with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) to ensure that equity and environmental concerns are applied to tolling projects throughout the region.