

Experience in Achieving Acceptance of Congestion Pricing

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Abstract:

Congestion pricing has been viewed as the answer to a number of urban transportation objectives, including congestion relief, mobility enhancement, and air quality and environmental improvement. It has been proposed as a "market-responsive" alternative. Yet, despite its widespread acceptance among economists and transportation professionals, congestion pricing has not so far been widely accepted by the public. This lack of public acceptance has been the stumbling block to past attempts at implementing congestion pricing. Recently, the United States Federal Highway Administration has supported congestion pricing programs. These include research addressing the institutional, political and equity issues, and funding for a congestion pricing pilot project. The primary objective of these programs is to address the main obstacle - public acceptability of congestion pricing. This paper examines the congestion pricing programs in various cities which have been designed to explore the feasibility of congestion pricing. The aims are to highlight the initiatives undertaken to enhance public acceptance, and to outline key lessons learned from these experiences. Finally, it examines the level of public support achieved.

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Introduction

Congestion pricing is one particular form of direct pricing for road use whereby drivers are charged a fee that varies with the time of day or the level of congestion. The variable fee or toll is designed to alter travel habits such as shifting time to off-peak travel, changing routes, carpooling or ridesharing, changing to other modes, etc. As a policy tool, congestion pricing has a potential to relieve peak-period traffic congestion in urban areas (Orski 1992).

There is a coalition of interests for congestion pricing policy as more cities grapple with ever increasing traffic congestion, air pollution, and environmental, social and economic impacts. The general public, however, remain unsupportive and sceptical of this policy because of a number of concerns including opposition to any new taxes or fees, and geographic and economic equity concerns. These concerns, as Jones (1991) pointed out, were the main stumbling block of past attempts to introduce congestion pricing in London, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, and The Netherlands. Policymakers, government bureaucrats and politicians continuously rejected proposals to implement congestion pricing fearing adverse public reaction, as is the case of the Hong Kong proposal (Orski 1992). It is this lack of political will that accounts for the very limited success of congestion pricing implementation in over three decades of extensive debate and exploration. So far the cities that have successfully implemented congestion pricing systems include the Area Licence Scheme in Singapore, the toll ring systems in three Norwegian cities; Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim, the variable toll schedule on major intercity routes in France, and the recently opened variable toll express lanes in Orange County, California (Federal Highway Administration 1996a). The Norwegian toll ring systems, however, were designed to raise revenue rather than to restrain traffic (Lewis 1994).

Recently, the United States Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has supported congestion pricing programs (FHWA 1992). These include research addressing the institutional, political and equity issues, and funding for congestion pricing pilot project to support state and local efforts explore the potential of congestion pricing. The primary objective of these programs is to address the main obstacle—public acceptability of congestion pricing.

This paper examines the above FHWA congestion pricing programs, along with the experiences of other cities exploring the feasibility of congestion pricing. It first highlights the initiatives undertaken to enhance public acceptance. It then outlines key lessons learned from these experiences. Finally, it examines the level of public support achieved.

Promoting congestion pricing to the public

The drive to implement congestion pricing in the United States gained national support when the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 authorised the Congestion Pricing Pilot Program (FHWA 1992). The objective of the program was to encourage experiments with congestion pricing projects in a variety of settings nationwide in order to learn more about problems of design, implementation, and operation of congestion pricing projects. The Federal Highway Administration is authorised to provide funding for state or local government projects. Ten cities were granted funding, namely: San Francisco-Oakland Bay; San Diego; Orange County, California; Los Angeles; Portland, Oregon; Houston; Boulder; Lee County, Florida; Minneapolis; and New York City. Due to budgetary reasons, however, the U.S. Congress rescinded unused balance of pilot program funds in Fiscal Year 1995 (FHWA 1996b). The congestion pricing concepts explored under the pilot program are summarised in Table 1 found in the Appendix.

One of the key features in the pilot program is the strong emphasis on public involvement in the process to assess the acceptability of congestion pricing strategies. This process is designed to create a foundation of public awareness, identify barriers and opportunities, and gather continuous public feedback for guidance. Several techniques used include focus groups, citizens jury, in-depth interviews, opinion polls, community meetings, and education and media campaign. In addition, the FHWA has sponsored a number of programs including symposia and workshops, and a study on the institutional, political and equity issues. Public outreach techniques adopted in each case study city are outlined below.

Focus groups

Focus groups are structured discussions of a topic or topics to reveal public attitudes, opinions, and reactions. Various focus groups were held in cities participating in the FHWA congestion pricing pilot program. The range of congestion pricing issues discussed to focus group participants include public acceptance, potential barriers, likelihood of use, willingness to pay, social equity, revenue allocation, evaluation criteria, and marketing. Focus groups were held in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Houston, Portland, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Chicago, San Francisco, Boulder County, and Lee County in southwest Florida (State and Local Policy Program 1996a; Texas Transportation Institute 1996; and Center for Urban Transportation Research 1996).

Citizens jury

Citizens jury projects are intended to amplify the voice of average citizen in the public policy process. The process is designed to elicit public opinion that is both representative and informed. Citizens jury project typically involve between 18 and 24

randomly selected individuals who meet for about five days. The agenda is structured to incorporate a balance of expert testimony for the first two or three days, followed by approximately two days of deliberations. The jury presents their recommendations and final report to the public at the conclusion of the week (mostly cited from Van Hattum and Sether 1996). This technique was employed for the Minneapolis-St. Paul Congestion Pricing Study where the jury heard testimony from over thirty expert witnesses for and against congestion pricing and deliberated over the pros and cons of four different congestion pricing applications.

Opinion leader interviews

In-depth interviews with key opinion leaders and policymakers were carried out for the Minneapolis-St. Paul Congestion Pricing Study. The opinion leaders represented business, industry, government, and social, community and environmental organisations. The inquiry covers a wide range of issues such as the potential benefits of congestion pricing, general reactions to pricing approaches, and strategies to enhance support from their constituents (State and Local Policy Program 1996a).

Interactive video interview station (IVIS)

The IVIS is an innovative technique adopted for the Minneapolis-St. Paul Congestion Pricing Study designed to carry out a metrowide personal interviews. The IVIS technology uses personal computers with "touch screens," and employs interactive, self-administered questionnaire that incorporate photos, graphics, and sound. The multimedia computer systems were set up at major employer locations, shopping malls, government centres, and other activity centres. The IVIS survey collected data on individual's willingness to switch to alternative mode, adjust travel time, or pay a congestion toll on both existing or new facilities (State and Local Policy Program 1996a).

Public opinion polling

Three public opinion polling surveys, each around 1700 respondents, were carried out for the Reduce Emissions and Cost for Highways (REACH) Task force in Southern California (REACH Taskforce 1997). The purpose of the surveys was to inform respondents about a set of complex pricing policies designed to reduce freeway congestion and motor vehicle emissions, and to estimate respondent support for those policies.

Education and media campaign

Both the Boulder Congestion Relief Study and the Minneapolis-St. Paul Congestion Pricing Study has undertaken extensive education campaign, providing informative program to help understand travel trends and traffic impacts on the community.

Symposia

The State and Local Policy Program (1996b) sponsored a Research and Policy Symposium on Land Use and Equity Impacts held in Minneapolis. The principal goal of the symposium was to give policymakers a better understanding of the interrelationship between land use, social equity, and transportation costs in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. In addition, the FHWA sponsored a symposium on Congestion Pricing Implementation Issues in Arlington, Virginia (FHWA 1992).

Workshops

The FHWA in collaboration with the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs' State and Local Policy Program sponsored congestion pricing workshops held in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Claremont campus in California (FHWA 1996c & d; State and Local Policy Program 1996a). The aim of the workshops was to generate discussion of the potential applicability and acceptability of congestion pricing in the region and provide open forums for discussion of perspectives on the applicability and acceptability of these concepts in different local contexts.

Key lessons learned from the pilot program and the existing toll systems

The key lessons learned from the different congestion pricing concepts explored in Table 1 are summarised in Table 2. So far only the variable toll express lanes along State Route 91 (SR-91) in Orange County, California is operational since December 1995. The other two, HOV Buy-in strategy (selling excess High Occupancy Vehicle capacity to single occupant cars) in San Diego, California and Off-peak toll discounts on the two existing toll bridges in Lee County, Florida, are scheduled for implementation in 1997. The remaining seven are pre-project studies. The various concepts explored demonstrate how pricing can be introduced to improve utilisation of existing capacity, and use it more efficiently. However it remains to be seen how and to what extent the congestion pricing concepts will work in practice. Most importantly, how will public attitudes change. While the program is at its early stage, there are some interesting lessons learnt. Table 2 highlights these along with plan initiatives and incentives to enhance public acceptance. Also included in Table 2 are experiences from operational tollways. Public opinions of the existing tollway systems in Norwegian cities are discussed in the subsequent section.

Importance of public outreach and media relations

As mentioned in the preceding section, one of the key features in the congestion pricing pilot program is the strong emphasis on public involvement in the process to assess the acceptability of congestion pricing strategies. The successful introduction of the SR-91 variable toll express lanes and the toll ring systems in Norway was largely credited to the thorough public information and media campaign. The public consultations emphasised the importance of an effective campaign to educate people on the problems

caused by congestion and the role congestion pricing plays in resolving those problems. Support from the media is also vital in the campaign. In Philadelphia, workshop participants agreed on extensive public outreach, and suggested that proponents first investigate the community interests before developing a strategy for outreach. Further, it emphasised media management and early participation of key decision-makers in project development. The Tappan Zee project recognised that internal support is needed to confront political obstacles. The Boulder Congestion Relief Study has offered a unique experience in promoting congestion pricing to the public. It employs an innovative technique called the “household budget exercise” whereby participants are asked to find ways to reduce their overall transportation expenditures and then offer input on potential congestion pricing scenarios

Successful implementation incentives

Besides the extensive public outreach and media marketing campaign, motorists were offered incentives to subscribe to the toll systems. For the SR-91 variable toll express lanes, customers were offered an incentive of \$25 in free tolls for subscribing before a certain date. The operator also offered a guarantee of a minimum 20-minutes trip time savings, and further guaranteed to refund transponder deposits, account balances, and the five most recently paid tolls to dissatisfied customers. Free passage is allowed for vehicles with three or more passengers, thus rewarding for ridesharing or carpooling. In the Norway toll ring systems, drivers were offered a 20% discount when signing a subscribers deal before the opening of the Oslo toll ring. In Bergen, toll tariffs were introduced at a relatively low rate with long periods of exemption (i.e., all weekend and at night). In Trondheim, motorists were given free tags and discounted rates as incentives to pre-register with the system. The different incentives were considered very successful (Lewis 1994; Hoven 1996).

Initiatives for economically disadvantaged drivers

Consideration of economically disadvantaged drivers is important in building public support. Initiatives planned to redress inequity if existing tolls on the San Francisco Bay Bridge are increased include the application of a lifeline toll (i.e. discounted toll rate) targeted for lower-income motorists. The program also looks at rebating all or part of the net funds generated to neutralise objections to the overall pricing program. Likewise the Los Angeles Congestion Pricing Study is considering lifeline rates to address social equity, and some exemptions to address geographical equity (State and Local Policy Program 1996a).

Political and administrative experience

The San Diego HOV Buy-in project demonstrates the advantage of a strong leadership and support of an outstanding politician in putting the case for congestion pricing program at both the local and state level. Their experience avoided many of the political concerns that other communities have had to deal with in promoting congestion pricing

Their experience also suggested the need to avoid confusion among transportation projects. Confusion currently exists among the public regarding transportation projects on the I-15 corridor due to an automated highway system demonstration project concurrently conducted with the congestion pricing and electronic toll collection demonstration project on the same facility. The Los Angeles Congestion Pricing experience recommends being forthright about plans to use congestion pricing to ensure that questions of governmental accountability are addressed early in the process and promises better success with the general public in the long run (mostly cited from the State and Local Policy Program 1996a).

Legislative barriers

Implementation of the San Francisco Bay Bridge's proposed high peak-period tolls for all westbound automobiles was held up awaiting legislative approval. A legislative hurdle was also experienced in the Maine Turnpike proposal to increase peak-hour tolls during its congestion pricing demonstration program. The Maine legislature disrupted the implementation of the original congestion pricing plan. Both the Maine legislature and businesses are strongly opposed to the toll increases fearing it will drive tourists away.

Public attitudes to the SR-91 variable toll lanes and Norway's toll ring systems

While the SR-91 express lanes project has so far been positively received, it is still too early to gauge its overall success. The California Polytechnic State University, responsible for the evaluation and monitoring study of the SR-91 variable express lanes, have released the following interim findings (mostly cited from ARDFA 1997).

The SR-91 toll lanes appeared to be an early market success. Subscription to the system were far above expectation. Public opinions on different aspects of the toll lanes showed high approval among travellers of the idea of adding new tolled capacity to bypass congestion. The surveys indicate 65-70% prior-opening approval by all motorists, and 70-85% post-opening approval for users of the toll lanes and HOV3+ (High Occupancy Vehicle with three or more occupants) travellers generally while 60-65% range for SOV (Single Occupant Vehicle) and HOV2 (cars with two occupants) users of the parallel free lanes. On the question of private for-profit aspect of the toll lane operation, prior-opening approval ratings were in the range 40-50%. Post-opening approval levels showed mixed results, with SOV travellers showing decreasing approval. The main reason for those who approved is the perceived efficiency of the private business while those who disapproved believed providing roads is a government responsibility. On the question of toll financing, survey respondents consistently showed 55-65% approval of toll financing generally, and about a third of respondents ranked tolls as their first choice for financing new highways, above gas taxes and general taxes. A mix of reasons were cited by those who expressed approved of toll financing. On the question of varying tolls, there is significant traveller acceptance; from about 45% prior to opening to about 55% for non-users of the toll lanes, and 60-

70% for toll lanes users. Other aspect of the express lanes that the public rated very highly is the hassle free fully automated tolling system.

For the Norway toll ring systems, about two-thirds of Oslo residents are not in favour of the Oslo toll ring system, a marked contrast to the Bergen toll ring system where over half of Bergen's residents are in favour of the system after its few years of operation (Lewis 1994). In Trondheim, generally there has not been a high level of dissatisfaction with the toll concept since implementation. Before and after interviews with motorists indicate a very big change of attitude from 72% down to 36% who are negative with respect to the toll ring (Hoven 1996). Another positive aspect of the Trondheim project was the evidence of the expenditure resulting from the scheme. The benefits from the revenue generated included the development of the ring road, Kroppen Bridge and dedicated cycle lanes in the city (Lewis 1994).

Assessment of congestion pricing perceptions

Public perceptions and opinions discussed in this section are the results of public outreach efforts mentioned above, and opinions from the operational toll systems.

Familiarity of the concept of congestion pricing

The majority of the participants in the public consultations were not very familiar with the concept of congestion pricing. In Houston, some participants were so unfamiliar with the concept that they felt uncomfortable discussing the issue until specific applications and proposals were explained. In Philadelphia, this lack of familiarity with the concept was cited as a key barrier. Despite the lack of familiarity of the concept of congestion pricing, the public consultations found that initial scepticism by participants changed once more concrete examples of applications were presented. The concept of congestion pricing was better understood through the use of analogy with pricing applications in the industrial sector, such as peak-period pricing of telephone and electricity.

Public support for congestion pricing

The FHWA public consultations has indicated there exist some level of support for congestion pricing. Major factors that could motivate the public to support congestion pricing include a clear plan of revenue use, commitment to transportation improvements including transit, provide better alternatives for those who will be forced out, and incentives for low-income users.

Experience from the pilot project suggests that planning for a congestion pricing scheme appropriate for the local context could attract public support. In the case of the San Diego HOV Buy-in, support for the project resulted from the public's perception of a wasted resource (i.e., empty HOV lanes). Opinion surveys of the off-peak toll discount demonstration project for the Maine Turnpike Congestion Pricing Program indicated the

public are supportive of the idea of peak-hour tolls if off-peak discounts are included. The Lee County project had shown that public and political support is greatest when variable fees are not tied to toll increases.

Experience from the Norway toll ring systems showed strong public opposition for as long as the systems were not operational. Both Bergen and Trondheim have improved their support from the public since implementation. The evident use of revenues generated from the Trondheim toll ring for the development of the ring road and dedicated cycle lanes in the city has further enhanced public approval of the system (Lewis 1994). Experience from the SR-91 project is quite different because it is built and operated by the private sector. Support for the project resulted from the ability of the private sector to build the project sooner than could the public sector. Besides, demand for congestion relief from the existing SR-91 freeway is so strong that motorists are signing up regardless of extra incentives.

Major concerns on the impact of congestion pricing

Public concerns on the impact of congestion pricing were the stumbling block in past attempts. Thus success of congestion pricing would depend largely on how effectively these concerns are addressed. The FHWA public consultations identified the following concerns: the use of revenues always top the list, distrust of the government's ability to allocate toll revenues, impact on downtown businesses, concern that low-income earners would be severely disadvantaged and that tolls are unfair and regressive, fear that congestion pricing would merely shift traffic to arterials, the idea that roads should be free and should be provided by the government, tolls being simply a new form of taxation, motorists feeling that they have paid enough through petrol and general taxes, and perceived benefits being intangible and uncertain. One participant in the Chicago focus groups commented that benefits from congestion pricing are "fuzzy benefits. The savings in lost productivity are fuzzy, but the cost you pay is very tangible." Time saved was not viewed as a benefit easily communicated to the general public or to politicians.

Conclusions

Congestion pricing has been viewed as the answer to a number of urban transportation objectives, including congestion relief, mobility enhancement, air quality and environmental improvement. It has been proposed as a “market-responsive” alternative. Yet, despite its widespread acceptance among economists and transport professionals, congestion pricing has not so far been widely accepted by the public. This lack of public acceptance has been the stumbling block to past attempts at implementing congestion pricing. It is for this reason that the U.S. congestion pricing programs have been directing enormous efforts to “sell” the concept to the public.

The focus on extensive public outreach and education, and on fostering open relations with the media is critical to the success of congestion pricing projects. Involving the public and policymakers early on in the process would enhance the chance of achieving success. The apparent lack of public understanding of the concept of congestion pricing, and its likely effectiveness and consequences, requires more careful assessments and properly designed public outreach and media campaigns. In the successful introduction of the Norway toll ring systems, extensive public and media campaign was vital in countering strong public opposition.

If congestion pricing is to be made acceptable, it should address public concerns relating to possible negative impacts on their mobility, on low-income population, etc. Kiran Bhatt of K.T. Analytics pointed out that “the use of revenues generated by congestion pricing projects is a key factor in determining a project’s success as research has shown that public acceptance of congestion pricing can swing dramatically, depending on how revenues are spent” (FHWA 1996a).

Public support for congestion pricing could be enhanced by offering congestion pricing options appropriate within the local context. The San Diego HOV Buy-in project has gained public support as the public recognises underutilisation of the existing HOV lanes as a wasted resource. The Maine Turnpike off-peak toll discount demonstration showed support for peak-hour tolls if off-peak discounts are included.

Offering incentives, such as those on the existing tollways, to some extent, proved successful in gaining public acceptance. While it is too early to measure success from the demonstration project, initial results from the SR-91 variable express toll lanes suggest increasing public approval of the system. The tangible, positive results would be necessary to successfully sell congestion pricing to the public.

Finally, a coalition of legislators, transportation officials, and the public is essential for any project to succeed.

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Appendix

Table 1 Congestion Pricing Concepts (Source: State and Local Policy Program (1996a), p 118)

Type of Project	Location	Project Specifics
New facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Route 91 (SR-91) in Orange County, California 	A private toll road built in a ten-mile stretch of an existing, highly congested corridor. Variable tolls are electronically charged on the express lanes.
Exploring variable toll on an existing toll road or bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in California Tappan Zee Bridge in New York, New York Bridges in Lee County Florida (Fort Myers) 	Increase the peak-hour toll for commuters, depending on demand, and/or lower the off-peak toll
Examining incentives on High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I-15 in San Diego, California Katy Freeway in Houston, Texas 	Allow a lower-occupancy vehicles to pay a fee to travel on existing, underutilised HOV lanes.
Considering other pricing options, including variable fees on new or existing congested road(s), parking pricing, and off-peak differentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota Boulder, Colorado Los Angeles, California Portland, Oregon 	Various applications being considered.

Table 2 Key Lessons Learned from Pilot Program and Existing Tollways
* (mostly cited from the State and Local Policy Program 1996a).

Project	Lessons Learned*
SR-91 Variable Toll Express lanes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choice of a step toll scheme instead of a toll rate that varies directly with the level of congestion was guided by focus groups opinions that consumers wanted to know ahead of time what it was going to cost them to travel on the lanes. Strong demand for congestion relief greatly encourage motorists to use the toll system regardless of extra incentives.

<p>Maine Turnpike Congestion Pricing Program (Existing Tollway)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and maintain legislative relationships. The Maine Legislature disrupted the implementation of the original congestion pricing plan. Without careful cultivation of relationships with identified elected leaders, congestion pricing may not be given a chance. • Congestion pricing may be more effective than simply raising tolls, and it may be more effective to pursue variable pricing. The Maine survey results indicate support for peak-hour tolls if off-peak discounts are included. • Heed stakeholders. The failure to implement Maine's original congestion pricing plan was due to great concerns among business and tourism-based stakeholders. Policymakers should pursue an effective strategic plan that would incorporate stakeholder concerns into their congestion pricing proposal.
<p>San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge Congestion Pricing Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objections to the overall congestion pricing program may be neutralised by rebating all or part of the net funds generated by the program. • The public should be convinced that there are no other reasonable alternatives for congestion relief than congestion pricing. • Consideration of economically disadvantaged drivers is important in building public support. Lifeline tolls are being considered to target lower-income motorists. • Spend time cultivating partnerships. Successful strategic planning will involve a coalition of political interests, ranging across spectrums. Coalitions reduce the rhetorical damage any particular interest group can have. The pricing policy should reflect the multiple interests that are involved in the partnership.
<p>Tappan Zee Bridge Congestion Pricing Project (Existing Tollway)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve policymakers before any public outreach begins. Internal support is needed to confront political obstacles. • Anticipate the reactions of public interest groups. Although environmental groups in the New York area have typically supported congestion pricing, they have argued that revenues be devoted to transit and other alternative modes of transportation. Unfortunately, due to the existing mandates, the thruway authority could not use revenues in this manner.

Lee County, Florida Congestion Pricing Project (Existing Tollway)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Front-end research is important in determining the type of fee schedule that will yield the greatest distribution of traffic at the least cost.• In choosing a pricing system, financial feasibility is more important than structuring a simple tolling system.• Public and political support is greatest when variable fees are not tied to toll increases.
San Diego Congestion Pricing Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify a political “white knight”. The San Diego project has benefited greatly from the leadership and support of an outstanding politician who trumpeted the congestion pricing program at both the local and state level. As a result, San Diego has been able to avoid many of the political concerns that other communities have had to deal with in promoting congestion pricing.• Avoid confusion among transportation projects. Confusion currently exists among the public regarding transportation projects on the I-15 corridor. In addition to congestion pricing and electronic toll collection, an automated highway system demonstration project is also being conducted on the same facility• Cooperative agreements take time. SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments) advises that one agency be appointed as “ultimately responsible” before these agreements are designed.
Boulder Congestion Relief Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public education experiences should go beyond the simple “town meeting” technique for gauging public response. Fun, innovative techniques like the household budget exercise may enhance the acceptance of congestion pricing within the community.• Initial emphasis on allowing the public direct input into the design of congestion pricing applications may help avoid political disputes over behaviour modification.
Los Angeles Congestion Pricing Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifeline rates are being considered to address social equity. Exemption based on the length of residents’s present commute is also considered to address geographical equity.• Media outreach should take place early in the process. It is important to get a diverse range of public feedback on what works, and what needs to be changed as policies and programs undergo refinement.• It is advantageous to be forthright about plans to use congestion pricing or VMT (Vehicle Miles Travel) emissions fees as a way to raise revenues. This ensures that questions of governmental accountability are addressed early in the process and promises better success with the general public in the long run.
