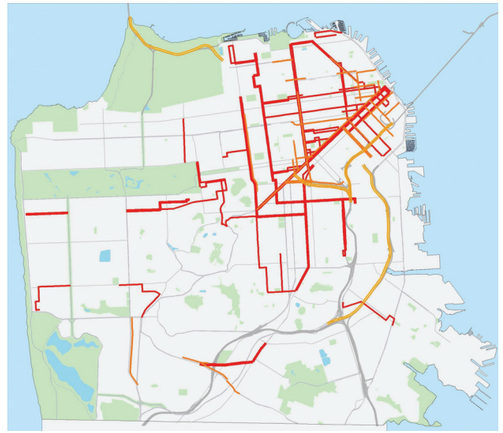
MOBILITY, ACCESS & PRICING STUDY

Newsletter 1
Fall 2007

Why is San Francisco considering pricing for mobility?

Strong demand to travel to central locations—with a high concentration of business activity, housing, shopping, and services—is desirable. Congested conditions, however, impose high economic and environmental costs. Delay accounts for more than half of the time in the average automobile journey, resulting in billions of dollars sacrificed each year due to lost productivity, excess fuel consumption, and unreliable deliveries. Widespread construction of new roadways is not feasible, so existing infrastructure must be managed to maximize system efficiency.

Congestion pricing programs in London, Stockholm, Rome, and elsewhere show that a carefully planned and implemented program has the potential to deliver significant benefits to San Francisco and other Bay Area travelers.

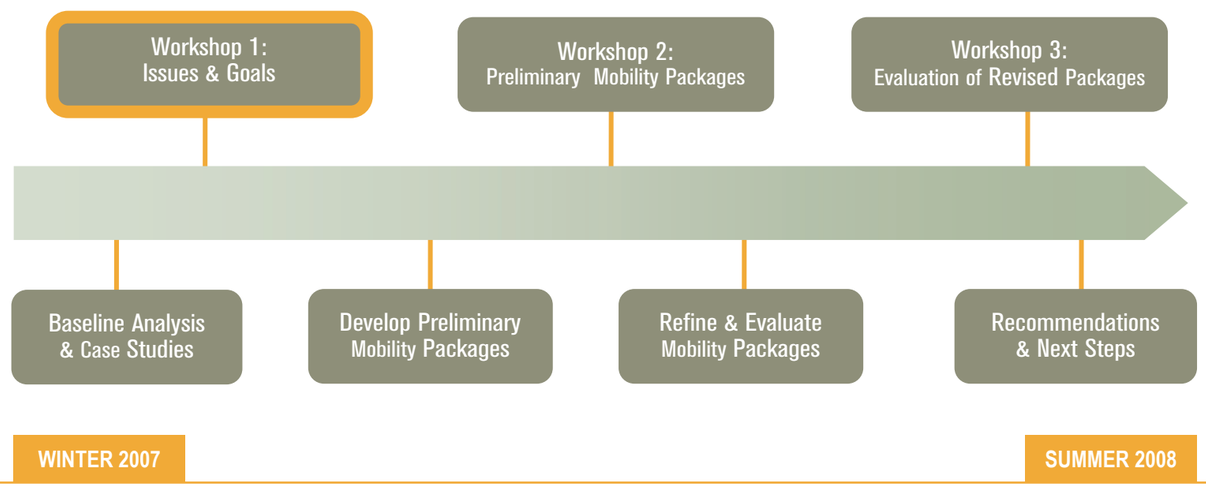


Congested Transit Segment (travel speed below 8 mph)
Congested Auto Segment (highway speed below 30 mph road speed below 10 mph)

Key Congestion-Related Statistics for San Francisco:

- Bay Area is the 2nd most congested metropolitan region in the nation
- Almost 90% of travelers consider downtown San Francisco congested
- Transportation consistently ranked among most important problems in Bay Area Council surveys
- Over half of streets in Downtown and SOMA operate below 10 mph during peak periods (shown above)

Study Timeline:



The Transportation Authority has launched a study to evaluate congestion pricing as a potential tool for improving mobility in San Francisco. This study will develop and analyze comprehensive packages that combine pricing for mobility with transit improvements, traffic flow enhancements, and other projects, to offer more sustainable choices to those traveling to and within San Francisco.

Unclogging our Streets

Despite being a Transit First city, on a typical weekday two-thirds of San Francisco travelers are in cars. Of the 1 million daily trips to and from the combined areas of Downtown, SOMA, and Civic Center, only 28% are made on public transportation. More than half of surface streets in downtown San Francisco average less than 10 mph during peak periods. Many of these congested auto routes are also high volume transit routes, resulting in transit trip times that are often more unreliable and sometimes twice as long as auto trips.

Improving the Transportation Network for All Travelers

By improving traffic flow and travel reliability, both transit riders and drivers can get to their destinations more quickly and dependably. Possible congestion pricing programs or mobility packages will be developed and evaluated for their respective benefits and impacts, then shared with the public for additional input and refinement. Through technical assessment, economic analysis, and public input, we will identify and evaluate potential packages of improvements intended to reduce the city's existing levels of congestion by improving alternatives to driving alone.

COMPONENTS of a CONGESTION PRICING PROGRAM

- Fee paid by drivers on congested routes or areas at the most congested times of day
- Revenues invested in enhancements to the transportation system, including:
  - More frequent transit service
  - Better access to local & regional transit
  - Enhanced traffic control technology
  - Road safety improvements
- Ongoing evaluation and monitoring to manage congestion and ensure system benefits

We want your input! See contact information below to:

- join the Study mailing list
- share comments, questions or concerns
- invite the Study team to a discussion at your office, community group, or school

Zabe Bent :: 415.522.4800 :: mobility@sfcta.org :: www.sfmobility.org

What is congestion pricing?

Congestion pricing involves charging motorists a fee to drive in specific, congested areas or corridors. This system is being used in many major cities around the world and is based on personal choice—motorists can drive if the convenience is worth the fee, or use alternatives like transit, biking, carpooling, or walking. Some may also choose to travel during less-congested times if it they feel it's not worth paying to drive into the priced area during the most congested periods. Revenues from congestion charges are typically used to fund transportation improvements, like better transit service, road improvements, and bicycle and pedestrian projects.

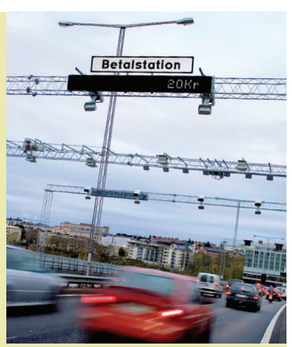
How would you define the priced roadways or area?

In general, candidates for congestion pricing are routes or areas with high existing and projected traffic volumes, low running speeds, and unreliable travel times for autos and transit. All of these measures are indicators of congestion. Other factors include whether an area expects substantial economic growth and the availability of robust transit options as an alternative to driving alone.

Does this only apply within San Francisco?

We are only evaluating the potential for congestion pricing on routes within San Francisco. While the congestion charge would be on local facilities, the effects and potential congestion relief would be far-reaching, as many of the vehicle trips on San Francisco streets begin outside of the city. Congestion pricing revenues could also be used to enhance regional transit services.

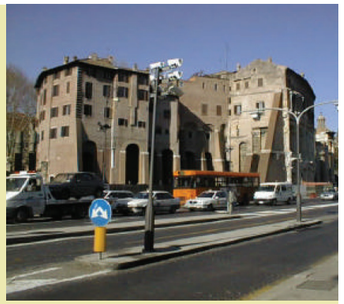
Stockholm's Program



In January 2006, Stockholm began a 7-month trial of congestion pricing. In a voter referendum following the trial, Stockholm residents approved the charging program and supported permanent implementation. After approval by the Swedish Parliament the program was resumed in August 2007. In Stockholm, vehicles are detected as they both enter or leave the city. Motorists are charged on weekdays, with fees varying based on time of day.

Type of Charge	Varies per crossing
Charge Amount	$1.50– $3.00
Traffic Reduction	-22%
Increased Use of Public Transportation	+5%
Annual Net Revenues	$50 million
Quick Fact	2,800 new regional park & ride spaces

Rome's Program



In 1989, the city of Rome adopted a limited traffic zone (ZTL) to reduce the number of cars clogging and polluting the innermost core area, using an access control system (ACS) that relied on paper permits and police enforcement employing barricades. In 1994, the ZTL was expanded and a penalty was introduced for being inside the zone without a permit. In 1998 an automated ACS was approved, largely pushed by local, national, and European environmental policies.

Type of Charge	Access control
Charge Amount	$425 per year
Traffic Reduction	-20%
Increased Use of Public Transportation	+6%
Annual Net Revenues	$72 million
Quick Fact	14 new regional & express bus lines

How would revenues from congestion charges be used?

It is envisioned that fee revenues would be reinvested in improving the transportation system, including enhancing the current transit system, extending the hours of transit service, and bringing public transportation to new neighborhoods. Improvements to the streets themselves would also be funded by a congestion pricing program. Those improvements could include signal timing, real-time travel information, street resurfacing, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and streetscape amenities like landscaping or lighting. Attend a public meeting to help us address this question.

Would bridge tolls stay the same?

Yes; the Study is not looking at changing any bridge tolls.

What would the fee be for driving into the charged area?

The Study will take a close look at what fee structure will allow us to make a noticeable improvement to the levels of congestion in the city, without unnecessarily harming drivers or area businesses. Fees charged in cities where a congestion pricing program has been implemented vary in the amount charged, size of the area or route, and time of day. Stockholm, London and Rome give us a few different models. The current charge in London is £8 ($16) per day. In Stockholm, the charge varies between 10 kr ($1.50) and 20 kr ($3.00) per trip, depending on time of day, with a maximum charge of 60 kr ($9.00) per day.

Would there be exemptions or discounts for any groups?

We will explore possible discounts as part of this Study, by considering the technical trade-offs of implementing these policies and soliciting public input on this question. London currently offers discounts or exemptions for residents of the charging zone and certain vehicle types. Stockholm offers exemptions for alternative fuel vehicles, motorcycles, mopeds, and for people with disabilities.

Who would pay to build the system?

The goal is for the system to be self-funding; revenues from congestion pricing should pay for the system, the cost of operations, and many of the necessary improvements. Both London and Stockholm have shown that operating costs can be covered by congestion charging revenues. The Study will explore start-up costs and how these costs can be funded, including Federal programs that offered up to $1 billion this year alone for these types of programs.

How would this impact downtown business, especially small businesses?

Active and vibrant streets are a key component of a thriving urban economy and environment. With a congestion pricing program in place, it is possible that downtown businesses will see an increase in customer traffic—including foot traffic—simply because traveling downtown would be faster, easier, and more pleasant. In London, sales in the charging zone have been growing faster than elsewhere in the city. As part of the study, we will conduct an economic analysis of the program and engage businesses as we develop and evaluate potential mobility packages.

Singapore's Program

Singapore pioneered congestion pricing by implementing a fee during weekday morning peak periods for drivers entering the city's central business district. The congestion charge was later expanded to include the afternoon period. In the 1990s, an electronic system was deployed that facilitates automated toll collection and monitoring of the program. The congestion pricing program allows traffic managers to maintain optimal usage of key roadway facilities in the city.

Type of Charge	Varies per crossing
Charge Amount	$0.32– $2.30
Traffic Reduction	-13%
Increased Use of Public Transport	n/a
Annual Net Revenues	$50 million
Quick Fact	Program in operation since 1975

London's Program

Since 2003, drivers traveling in an 8.5 square mile area of central London have been assessed a flat daily fee when driving within the designated zone on a weekday. Traffic levels entering the zone decreased by more than 20 percent, reducing delay for remaining vehicles, while substantial net revenues have been poured into improved public transportation services, road improvements and bicycle facilities. In February 2007, the charging zone was considerably expanded, largely due to broad public acceptance and approval of congestion pricing.

Type of Charge	Flat daily fee
Charge Amount	$16.00
Traffic Reduction	-30%
Increased Use of Public Transportation	+18%
Annual Net Revenues	$200 million
Quick Fact	14,000 new bus seats added

Are other US cities or regions contemplating congestion pricing programs?

Congestion pricing is used in London, Singapore, Rome, Stockholm, and other cities. In the US, congestion pricing has been applied to carpool lanes, known as HOT lanes (San Diego, Orange County, and Minneapolis), as well as to parking (Redwood City). New York City recently received $350m in Federal funding for its proposal to charge a fee to drive in Manhattan south of 86th Street. Seattle is also planning to implement a variable fee on a major bridge that serves as a gateway to the city center.

What is the timeline for this Study?

It is very early in the Study, and we are currently conducting data collection and initial analysis. We expect to present preliminary results in the spring. Later in 2008, we will present recommendations and a comprehensive report on the potential benefits and impacts of congestion pricing to the public.

Will there be opportunities for public input?

Yes! The Transportation Authority will conduct a series of public workshops to gather input at key points in the Study. The Study is also informed by ongoing involvement of several stakeholder advisory groups, representatives from local and regional transit agencies, members of the business community, and our Citizens Advisory Committee. Visit the website or join our mailing list for information about upcoming meetings and Study updates.