

## Benefits

There is a consensus among economists that Congestion Pricing represents the single most viable and sustainable approach to reducing traffic congestion.

Although drivers unfamiliar with Congestion Pricing may initially have questions and concerns, surveys show that drivers more experienced with the concept support it—most likely because Congestion Pricing benefits everyone:

### Benefits to Drivers:

- Guarantees toll-paying drivers a reliable trip speed and travel time, which is especially important when they have to be somewhere on time.
- Reduces delays and stress by increasing the predictability of trip times.
- Reduces congestion in at least some toll lanes, allowing more cars to keep moving on the highway.

For example:

- On the State Route 91 priced Express Lanes in Orange County, California, drivers save as much as a half an hour each way (or an 5 hour a day) for a 10-mile commute—during rush hour, traffic on the State Route 91 moves at more than 60 mph, while the adjacent unpriced lanes crawl at average speeds of 15 mph or less.

If we use Congestion Pricing to restore free-flowing traffic conditions on Virginia's metropolitan interstates during rush hour, similar results could be achieved. For example, an average commuter using a 5-mile interstate segment twice each day would save about a half an hour each day, or 120 hours annually—that's three weeks of work or leisure time!

### Benefits to Transit Riders, Carpoolers and Vanpoolers:

- Improves transit speeds and the reliability of transit service.
- Provides bus riders with travel-time savings equivalent to those for drivers.
- Reduces waiting time for express bus riders due to more frequent service.
- Lowers costs for transit providers as a result of increased transit ridership.
- Encourages carpooling, vanpooling, teleworking and other transportation options.

For example:

- Within 3 months of the opening of the priced express lanes on California's State Route 91, a 40 percent increase occurred in the number of vehicles with 3 or more passengers.
- After the HOV lanes were converted into HOT lanes on Interstate 15 in San Diego, carpooling increased significantly, even though there was no change in incentives to carpool—carpoolers continued to use the lanes free of charge, as they did before the lanes were converted. Similar effects were observed when the HOV lanes on Interstate 25 in Denver were converted to HOT lanes in June 2006.

## **Benefits to Community**

- Improves the quality of transportation services without tax increases or large capital expenditures.
- Shortens incident response times for emergency personnel, thus saving lives.
- Maximizes return on the public's investment in highways, by preventing the loss of traffic flow.
- Generates funding for transit and ridesharing options—on San Diego's Interstate 15 HOT lanes, revenues generated by toll-payers financed transit improvements that also contributed to a 25 percent increase in bus ridership.
- Retains businesses and expands the tax base—heavy traffic commutes can cause employees to continually be late to meetings, affect recruitment efforts and increase delivery costs. Reducing traffic congestion can help businesses be more productive and profitable.

## **Benefits to Society as a Whole**

- Reduces fuel consumption and vehicle emissions since vehicles are not idling in traffic.
- Allows more efficient land use decisions—reduced traffic enhances the quality of life.
- Increases competitiveness of U.S. business in international markets and boosts the economy.

For example:

- Growing congestion and unreliability threatens truck transportation productivity and ultimately the ability of sellers to deliver products to markets. Congestion Pricing on the nation's major thoroughfares will guarantee free-flowing traffic. As a result, reliability will be restored to the transportation system, keeping business and transportation costs low, as well as end product or service costs.