

Congestion Pricing in the US

The following states have instituted some form of Congestion Pricing:

Virginia

A variation of Congestion Pricing used all over the world, known as High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, is currently under development on the I-495 corridor in Northern Virginia. A toll is required for solo drivers and low-occupancy vehicles that want to use high-occupancy vehicle lanes, while carpoolers, vanpoolers, motorcycles, buses and emergency vehicles could use the lanes free of charge.

California

San Diego, 1996: A 2-lane, 8-mile reversible HOV-2 facility was implemented in the median of I-15. Solo drivers could use these HOV-3 lanes if they purchased monthly "ExpressPass" permits for \$70. In 1998 a fully automated dynamic pricing pilot project was implemented to deduct per-trip fees from pre-established accounts as opposed to charging a monthly flat fee. To accommodate the changing price, the ExpressPass was replaced by electronic transponders (FasTrak) that could be affixed to drivers' car windshields. Today a posted schedule informs drivers of the highest toll they should expect to pay during the hour of operation. Tolls typically vary from \$0.50 to \$4 depending on congestion.

Studies from these projects show that both forms of Congestion Pricing—the fixed monthly fee-based ExpressPass and the dynamic per-trip-based FasTrak—were successful. Both forms also proved to be capable of generating significant changes in travel behavior.

Orange County, 1995: Four variable-priced express lanes opened in the median of the State Route 91 Freeway—it was the world's first implementation of Congestion Pricing using electronic variable tolling. Every three months the toll schedule is adjusted according to the observed traffic congestion over that 3-month period. Speeds on the express lanes typically move at 60-65 mph while congestion on the free lanes causes speeds as low as 15-20 mph. As a result, during a typical Friday afternoon rush hour, the 91 Express Lanes have twice as much vehicle throughput as the free lanes.

Florida

Lee County, 1998: Variable Pricing was established on the Cape Coral and Midpoint Bridges. Today, to encourage drivers to adjust their travel times, these bridges offer half-price tolls in the time period just before and just after peak travel periods. Typical tolls cost between \$0.50 and \$1. Only drivers who have a pre-paid account with LeeWay—Florida's Electronic Tolling system—are eligible for the discount.

Studies showed that a significant number of Lee County residents *did* change their driving behavior, even though the difference in toll prices in peak vs. non-peak travel was as low as \$0.25. Congestion Pricing in Florida continues to be successful in offering their residents a monetary reason to change their driving behavior.

Minnesota

Minneapolis, 2004: The I-394 MnPASS Express Lanes (HOT Lanes) opened. Drivers could use these lanes if they obtained a MnPASS electronic transponder. Preliminary evaluations have proven that Congestion Pricing is an effective traffic management tool that ensures free-flowing speeds for transit and carpoolers,

helps vehicles better utilize HOV-lane capacity, and even provides congestion relief for non-MnPASS lane users.

However, MnPASS holders benefit the most from the Express Lanes as it provides them with a nearly congestion-free alternative. For example, studies show that MnPASS users travel approximately 25 mph faster during peak periods than non-users, with a 3-4 mph speed gain for non-users.

Texas

Houston, 1998: A Congestion Pricing project named QuickRide was established on an existing 13-mile HOV lane stretch of the I-10. It allows a limited number of carpools with only two riders (HOV-2) to buy into the reversible HOV-3 lane during peak travel periods. During this time, participating HOV-2 vehicles pay a \$2 per trip toll, while HOV-3 vehicles continue to travel free of charge. Solo drivers are not allowed to use the HOV lanes. To avoid causing congestion for HOV-3 riders, the number of HOV-2 vehicles permitted to travel on these lanes is limited. Like the 91 Express Lanes and I-15 projects, QuickRide is also automated using windshield-mounted transponders and overhead readers.

According to the program's website, the HOV lanes facilitate almost 110,000 vehicle trips each weekday, 35,000 of which would otherwise be traveling on the free main lanes. Also, during rush hour, the HOV lanes maintain average speeds of 50-55 mph while the main lanes only reach 24 mph.

The above data was gathered from [the following website](#).