# What Do People Think About Congestion Pricing?

A Deliberative Dialogue with Residents of Metropolitan Washington

Presentation on the TPB's Study on the Public Acceptability of Congestion Pricing

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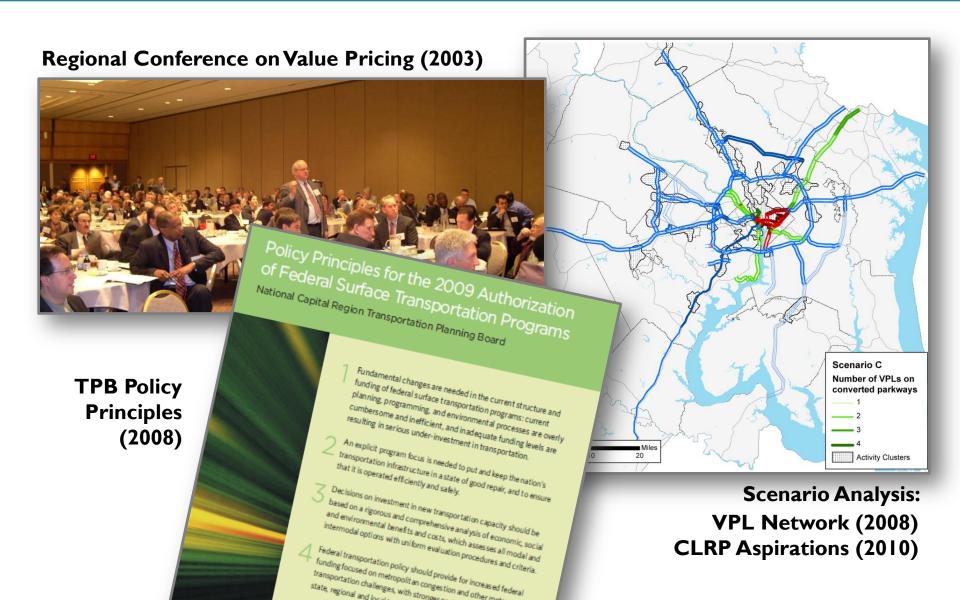


### What is Congestion Pricing?

Tolling and pricing systems that charge travelers more to use transportation facilities when there is more congestion



#### A decade of work on pricing at the TPB



#### Value pricing projects in the region

#### Intercounty Connector (ICC)

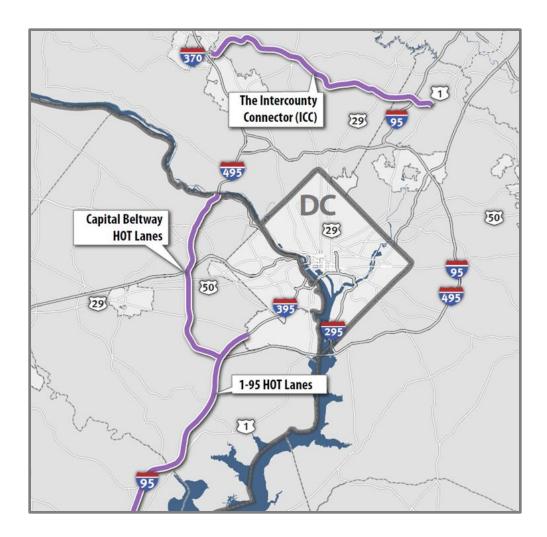
- Added to CLRP in 2004
- Majority opened 2011

#### Beltway HOT Lanes

- Added to CLRP in 2005
- Opened 2012

#### I-95/I-395 HOT Lanes

- Added to CLRP in 2007
- Under construction (I-95)



### Brookings Institution proposal

- Authored by Alice Rivlin & Benjamin Orr in 2009
- "proposes replacing state gas taxes with regional road-use pricing"
- "A demonstration project should be launched in the Washington region that uses GPS transponders to categorize motorists' travel"



GREATER WASHINGTON RESEARCH AT BROOKINGS

#### Road-use Pricing: How Would You Like to Spend Less Time in Traffic?

"The national capital region should serve as an example of what truly sustainable transportation policy looks like for the rest of the

nation."

Severe congestion and underfunded public transportation systems in the Washington, D.C. region Severe congression and undernature public transportation systems in the presidential, the re-and nationwide call for a more sustainable way of pricing transportation. This brief proposes and resources can us a more assumption may or priority transportation. This write proposed replacing state gas taxes with regional road-use pricing that takes into account the effects of represents a size good career many regional reportation providing incentives to reduce traffic congestion and pollution

To achieve this, a demonstration project should be launched in the Washington region that uses GPS transponders to categorize motorists travel based on distance, level of congestion, and type of vehicle. The transponder would calculate the totals for each category and drivers would type the senset. The transposition mount behaviore the totals for each belowing and university objecting the charged accordingly when they purchased gas. Tourists and other motorists lacking the GPS the charges accordingly mann any purchases gas, nothing and other inventor according the one device would continue to pay the full gas tax. At an average price of between 0 and 15 cents per

#### I. Introduction

ccording to the Texas Transportation Institute, Washington D.C. area commuters on average wasted a workweek and a half (60 hours) due to traffic congestion in 2005, the second worst in the nation. The cost to the average commuter in terms of time and gas wasted was the equivalent or almost 151100. Since 2000 this delay has increased by an entire workday. For comparison, in 1982 area commuters were only delayed 16 hours, amounting to barely \$143 (in 2005 dollars) in losses. Additionally, over a quarter of area workers 16 or older not working at home had one way commutes longer

than 45 minutes in 2007. Three percent had commutes longer than 90 minutes.

More recently, tramc has eased slightly as wehicle miles traveled fell three percent in the spring of 2008 Moute recently, trains, has eased anymy as written times traveled less times present in the spring or above wersus a year earlier in a study conducted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, However, vessus a year earner in a supply constructed by the west openion washington countries coveringents. Frowever, this reduction was due to the poor economy and last year's record gas prices. The price of gas has since failen and the recession will not last forever, therefore the decrease in traffic is almost certainly temporary.

And there are more of us every year. From 2005 to 2007 the Washington area added 88,877 people over the And under are more or us every year. From 2000 to 2007 the washington area access one of 277 proprie over it age of 16 to the commuting labor force (those who do not work from home). The Metropolitan Washington ogen to be the community made to be those with all not work more normal, the metropolitan reading to the council of Governments projects that the metropolitan area as a whole will add 1.6 million new residents by

The traditional response to traffic congestion has been to build more and bigger roads. Increasing road riper international response to their congestion has been to build more and bigger roads. Increasing road capacity seemed like a reasonable response, and yet congestion kept getting worse. The problem was that the

demand for roads always rose to meet (and quickly exceed) capacity and congestion kept getting worse. Economists suggest the reason: Except for a few toll roads, motorists do not directly pay to use the road. If ECONNINGS SUggest the reason; Except for a new ton roads, motorists do not uncount page to use the roads, something is free—or appears to be—demand tends to outstrip supply. Motorists do pay gas taxes, which roughly relate to the miles they drive, but once they have a full tank the price of using 2 It is a country lane or a congested commuter route. However

### Joint research project

- Grant awarded in 2011 from the FHWA's Value Pricing Pilot Program
- Research partners:
  - TPB & the Brookings Institution
- Public engagement consultant:
  - AmericaSpeaks

#### Research Problem

- Transportation revenues are decreasing and congestion is increasing
- Congestion pricing is a tool that could partially solve these twin challenges
- But officials assume that support for congestion pricing is very low.

#### Research Questions

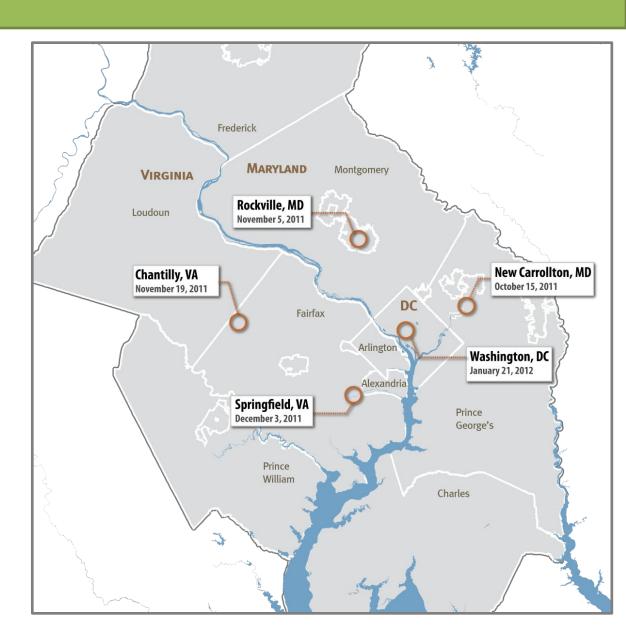
- As people learn more about congestion pricing, will their attitudes about it change?
- Upon which factors (costs and benefits) does their acceptance hinge?
  - What factors matter to people?
  - How strongly do people feel about those factors?
  - What factors cause people to change their minds?

### **Deliberative Forums**



### Sampling the region

- Five forums
- October 2011-January 2012
- Each forum lasted
   4½ hours
- More than 300 paid participants
- Broadly representative of the region



### "Why are you here?"

How we explained the forums to participants:

- Congestion pricing is a type of road tolling that <u>could</u> help solve our funding and congestion problems.
- But, do you believe the benefits are worth the costs?

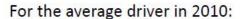
Let's talk about it...

#### **Baseline Information**

#### Big challenges ahead

- Severe congestion
- Funding shortfalls

#### What are the costs of congestion?



- Time: More than 100 hours of delay
- Money: Value of lost time is more than \$2,000







Gas taxes haven't been increased in years

	Tax Per Gallon	Year of Last Increase
Federal	18.4 cents	1993
Virginia	17.5 cents	1986
Maryland	23.5 cents	1992
D.C.	23.5 cents	2009



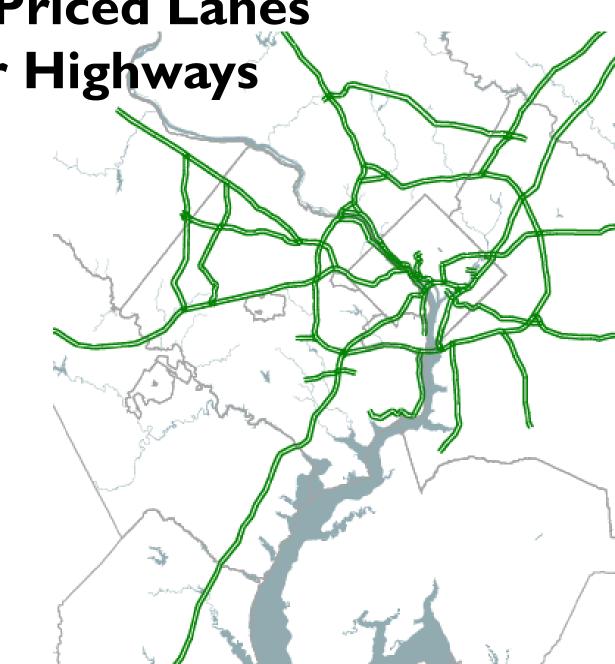




Scenario I: Priced Lanes on All Major Highways

What if...

All major
highways had at
least one tolled
lane with freeflowing traffic?



# Scenario 2: Pricing on All Streets and Roads

#### What if...

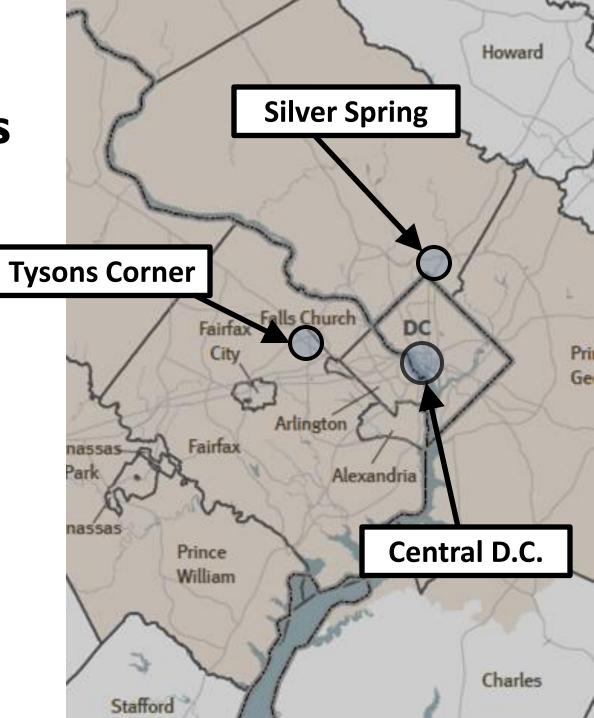
Instead of paying gas taxes, drivers paid per-mile fees calculated by GPS?



Scenario 3: Priced Zones

What if...

Drivers had to pay to enter central Washington, DC, Silver Spring, or Tysons Corner?



#### **Data Sources**

- A combination of qualitative and quantitative data:
  - –Keypad poll questions (including demographics)
  - -Scribe notes
  - -Paper surveys

# Small groups discuss benefits and costs



### Scribes record discussions



#### Theme teams summarize comments



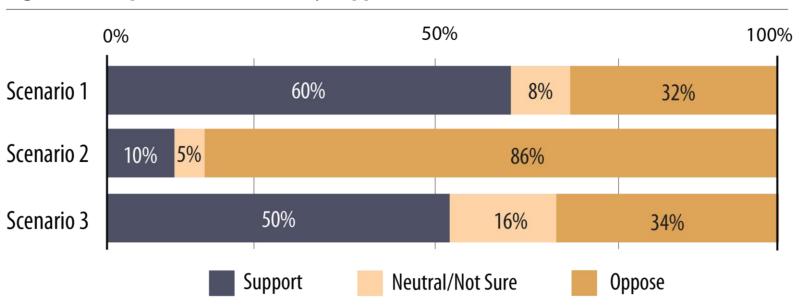
### Polling questions throughout the day



# How do people see the region's transportation problems?

- Congestion has deep personal impacts
- Funding shortfalls do not resonate
- Many people are unaware of how transportation is currently funded or that gas taxes haven't been raised in 20 years
- People lack confidence in government to solve transportation problems.

Figure 1: Comparison of End-of-Day Support for the Three Scenarios



#### Scenario 1: Priced Lanes on All Major Highways

- Garnered the most support
- Offers choice and predictability

#### Scenario 2: Pricing on All Streets and Roads

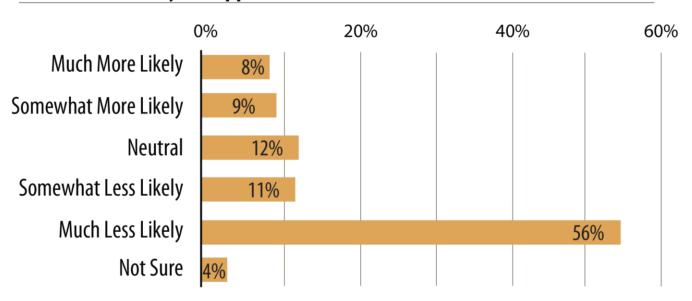
- Strong negative reactions
- Concerns about privacy, complications, impracticality

#### Scenario 3: Priced Zones

- Seemed logical and straightforward to participants
- Was not seen as regional

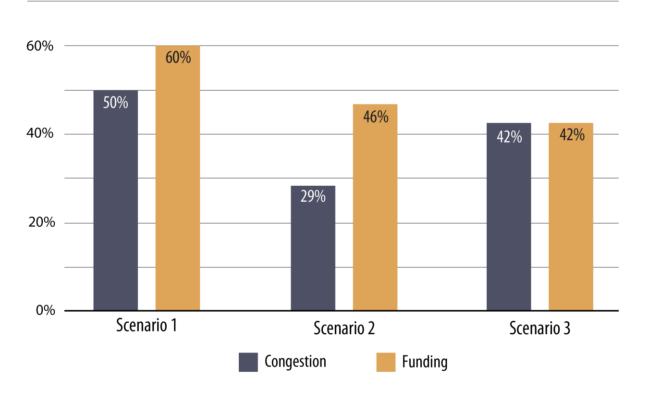
Scenario 2: People did not support replacing gax taxes.

Figure 9: "Scenario 2 Would Entirely Replace Gas Taxes. Does This Make You More or Less Likely to Support it?"



 Overall: People were skeptical about the effectiveness of the scenarios, particularly in reducing congestion.

Figure 6: Perceptions of Effectiveness at Addressing Congestion and Funding Shortfalls



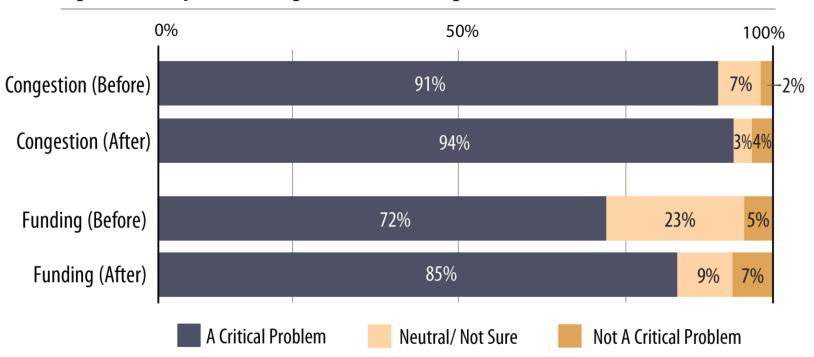
#### What's the basis for people's opinions?

- Choice: Pricing must provide options.
- **Privacy:** Significant concerns. People are worried about government overreach and a loss of control.
- **Effectiveness:** Doubts about whether pricing will actually work.
- **Use of revenues:** Guarantee transparency and accountability.
- Fairness: Not pivotal.

## At the end of the forums, what did people think?

Positions hardened.

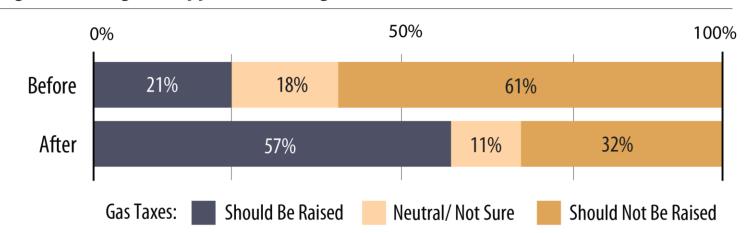
Figure 2: Perceptions of Congestion and Funding Shortfalls as Critical Problems



### At the end of the forums, what did people think?

Support for raising gas taxes tripled.

Figure 3: Change in Support for Raising Gas Taxes



# At the end of the forums, what did people think?

- Cautious openness to pricing.
- If implemented, pricing must be integrated with wider strategies and existing systems.
- First things first: Make common sense improvements, including road and Metro maintenance.

#### What does it mean?

- People are skeptical of pricing as an overall solution, but they may support specific proposals if they see direct benefits in their daily lives.
- People are more concerned about government overreach than they are about "Lexus Lanes."
- People are more likely to support more obvious solutions – such as increasing gas taxes – than more radical approaches like congestion pricing.
- People want to know that congestion pricing is part of a wider strategic vision.

#### For more information

www.mwcog.org/CongestionPricing/PublicAcceptability

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Thank you!