

MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee
FROM: John Swanson, Principal Planner
SUBJECT: Update on the TPB's Study on the Public Acceptability of Road-Use Pricing
DATE: September 2, 2011

Overview

In February 2011, the TPB, in partnership with the Brookings Institution, launched a study to investigate issues related the public acceptability of road-use pricing. The TPB has received a grant from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Value Pricing Program to conduct this research.

Using the Metropolitan Washington Region as a case study, this project will use invitation-based *deliberative forums* to explore attitudes toward a variety of pricing options, ranging from variably priced toll roads to system-wide vehicle-based pricing systems. These forums will occur this fall. The forums will be designed to include between 60 and 70 members of the general public and will last approximately four hours. At these events, participant feedback will be recorded and monitored as information is shared and discussions ensue. By engaging the public in an extended exchange of ideas, opinions and reactions, the project will identify challenges and opportunities that decision makers would face if they were to move forward with implementing options for road-use pricing.

Recent Activity

- In July, the organization America Speaks was selected as the primary consultant responsible for conducting deliberative forums in the fall. America Speaks is a the non-profit that has used its 21st Century Town Meetings format in a variety of forums designed to measure and explore citizen attitudes. Examples in our region include Mayor Williams' budget forums, sessions on the future of DC's Walter Reed property and the Envision Prince George's forums.
- In August, TPB and Brookings staff, along with America Speaks staff, began planning the design and content for the deliberative forums. Two forums will be conducted in Maryland, two in Virginia and one in the District of Columbia.
- In preparation for the deliberative forums, the study team conducted four listening sessions (conducted in a focus-group format) in June and July with key stakeholders. Participants included local advocacy leaders, members of the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee and transportation professionals who have implemented pricing programs across the country and internationally in other areas.