CARB & UC Davis VMT Retreat

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Key Takeaways

**Equitable Congestion Pricing**
(SB1 Research project with SFCTA)

Congestion Pricing can be one element of an equitable transportation ecosystem if certain strategies employed:

- **Process equity** - Meaningful community co-creation
- **Practice equity** - Refine charges and income-based discounts to strike a balance between efficiency and equity
- **Outcome equity** - Clear plan for investing CP revenues in areas that provide affordable alternatives to driving. e.g. linking to reduced transit pass program.

Stay tuned - Part 2 of the SB1 project- SFCTA equity analysis of San Francisco’s proposed (and paused) Congestion pricing strategy

**Lessons from Cities Considering Congestion Pricing**
(SB1 White Paper Project- Pending review)

Among 7 cities studied evaluating CP:

- All prioritizing equity and fairness in review (SF, LA, Seattle, Boston, NYC, Auckland, Vancouver).
- Several formally considering income based discounts (SF, Seattle, Vancouver)

No clear timeline of study-adoption
Sample Cities Considering Congestion Pricing

- Auckland
- New York City
- San Francisco
- Seattle
- Vancouver
- Los Angeles
- Boston

*New York is completing an environmental assessment, part of the National Environmental Protection Act Requirements

Source: Colner, D'Agostino 2021.(Draft)
Equity Considerations

- Majority of studies regarding equity focus on leveraging investments that improve outcomes for disadvantaged populations.
- Discounts are a strategy to reduce regressivity, and keep costs high enough for the general population to affect travel behavior decisions.
- TNC taxation study showed TNC taxes were not likely high enough to affect travel changes.

Sources: Top right: West, Jens, and Maria Börjesson 2020.; Bottom: Colner, D'Agostino 2021.(Draft)
VMT Reduction Potential

- Congestion pricing is seen as one of the most effective strategies for managing traffic in dense and congested corridors.
- Identifying the right cost structures remains a huge challenge for all CA cities.
- Discounting that encourages multi-modal transportation and use of transit are best, and discounts for in-zone residents or electric vehicles will likely inhibit CP efficiency and expand inequity.

- Pandemic travel changes caused most CP systems to go offline. Unknown prospects for reviving downtown commerce, when office vacancy rates remain high.
- May need to consider multi-zonal systems that target non-commute hot spots (especially important in areas with polycentric development).

“The lower the charge, the more it can be described as a ‘tax grab’ - only at relatively higher charges do the congestion benefits start to appear”  New Zealand Government. The Congestion Question: Technical Report. 2020
Recommended Policy Actions

• For state Legislators:
  • Reform Preemptive Policies restricting congestion pricing locally
  • Fund Congestion Pricing Pilots (with equity requirements) to test effectiveness in monocentric and polycentric traffic systems.

• For state regulators:
  • Road User Charge: Establish payment mechanisms for collecting state VMT-based fees, that can be adapted for use by local governments to manage congestion.
  • Support Research on how to make management of OBD data from OEMs to support congestion pricing, and identify tradeoffs and best practices.
  • Develop Guidance for Congestion Pricing Equity following guidance on process equity, practice equity, and outcome equity.