

# TRANSPORTATION FUTURES

## Equity and Transportation Funding: Outreach Summary

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For the Transportation Futures Task Force

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## Section 1:

# Introduction

To understand how different transportation funding mechanisms may affect certain populations in the central Puget Sound region, the Transportation Futures Task Force staff hosted four roundtables and conducted eight one-on-one interviews in four counties. These discussions supplemented the existing body of research about public perceptions of transportation revenue sources.

The roundtables and interviews focused on understanding how people from rural communities, people with low incomes, communities of color, people with limited-English proficiency, people with disabilities, youth, and seniors may be affected by different transportation funding mechanisms. This report refers to these populations collectively as “target populations.”<sup>1</sup>

The Transportation Futures Task Force hosted roundtable discussions in King, Pierce, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties to gather feedback from organizations that serve target populations about how transportation funding mechanisms might affect target populations. Participants also provided ideas to mitigate for negative effects of transportation funding mechanisms on the target populations.

To supplement the data collected at the roundtable discussions and ensure the research adequately represents all target groups and geographic areas, staff conducted interviews with eight additional individuals representing targeted populations.

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<sup>1</sup> The only exception is when participants refer to a population group specifically, e.g., “Participants commented that this approach may have an adverse effect on seniors.”

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## Section 2:

# Key Findings

### Reduced fees for people with low incomes

Participants in all four counties agreed that any funding mechanisms implemented should provide fee reductions or complete exemptions for people with low incomes. Generally, participants agreed people with an income at or below 30% median should qualify for a significantly reduced rate and people with an income between 30% and 60% median should qualify for a moderately reduced fare.

### Transparency

Participants called for an increase in transparency from the jurisdictions collecting the transportation revenue. Participants added that people want to know how much money they are paying, how jurisdictions will use it, and who benefits.

### Progressivity

Participants repeatedly expressed concern about regressive transportation funding mechanisms and called for leadership to create progressive funding for transportation systems.

### Flexibility in Revenue Usage

Most participants expressed interest in making revenue available for multiple transportation needs. Participants expressed interest in funding mechanisms that could provide revenue for large projects such as new rail lines, improving bus systems, and road maintenance.

### Public Education

Participants discussed public education as an important factor in implementing any revenue source. Participants generally held the opinion that, regardless of the funding mechanism, an education campaign tailored to each group in the target population and the general public is necessary.

### Privacy Concerns

Participants expressed concern about invasions of privacy for both target populations and general users. Most participants agreed a system that collects GPS information would concern target populations, some of whom, especially people of color and immigrants, mistrust government. Participants stated that if a funding mechanism requires data, the collecting body would need to consider how to preserve drivers' privacy.

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## Investment in Public Transit

Participants expressed strongly that improving and expanding the public transit system is a significant priority for the target populations. Participants identified various areas for improvement including accessibility, frequency of service, and quicker rides.

## Quality of Life

Many participants asked that decision-makers consider how different revenue sources might affect quality of life for target populations. Quality of life issues included mobility, commute times, and the psychological effect of not being able to afford to travel on toll lanes.

## Flat-Rate Pass

A few participants proposed the idea of a pass that provides people with low incomes a reduced, flat rate in lieu of paying variable rates for tolls or other transportation funding. This pass would be similar to the Puget Pass or ORCA Pass used to ride transit. They liked this idea because it allows people with low incomes the access they need to roads without the barrier of cost-prohibitive fees.

## Intermodal Connectivity

Participants called for improvement in how current transportation systems work together to make it easier for people to get from home to their destination without a car. Participants saw a more accessible transit system as one way to mitigate the burden they perceive existing and new revenue sources being considered might put on the target populations.

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## Section 3:

# Funding Mechanisms Considered

### Tolling

Tolling adds a fee for traveling entire roadways or for single occupancy vehicles to travel in the express lanes of certain roadways. Tolls can be charged at a variable rate based on peak travel times or the current level of road congestion, or they can be charged at a flat rate each time a driver uses the roadway.

### Pay-per-mile

A pay-per-mile system charges drivers for every mile they travel. This fee could be charged as a variable rate based on peak travel times and congested areas or could be charged at the same flat rate for each mile. Mileage data could be collected through odometer readings, self-reporting, an in-vehicle GPS system, or a cellphone GPS system.

### Major Emissions Fee

The major emissions fee could be structured in a way similar to the carbon tax or to the cap-and-trade system. Drivers would be charged for the impact their driving has on the environment. The conversation did not include specifics about how the fee would be collected. The revenue raised could have a wide variety of uses beyond transportation.

### Transportation Utility Districts

Transportation utility district fees are charged to property owners within the utility district based on how many 'trips' their land use is expected to generate. This revenue source would fund improvement and maintenance of local roads.

### Impact Fees

Impact fees are charged to property owners for building a new structure. This fee could be implemented immediately and would support local transportation projects.



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## Section 4:

# Meeting Summaries

## 4.1 Meeting Format

Each meeting began with a brief presentation about the need for new transportation funding strategies in the Puget Sound region, followed by a review of each funding mechanism. Next, a facilitator moderated a discussion about each funding mechanism and how participants think it may affect target populations.

## 4.2 Meeting Summaries

The following sections include summaries of each individual roundtable discussion.

### 4.2.1 Transportation Futures Roundtable Summaries

#### King County



Meeting Date:

October 5, 2015

Meeting Location:

The 2100 Building  
2100 24<sup>th</sup> Ave S

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	Seattle, WA 98144
Number of Attendees:	6 participants
Facilitator:	Brett Houghton, PRR
Technical presenter:	Ben Bakkenta, PSRC
Note-taker:	Tori Varyu, PRR
Target Populations Represented:	People with low incomes, seniors, Native Americans, youth, and people with disabilities

### Attendees:

- Kari Ware, Solid Ground
- Kelli Lugtu, Seattle Indian Health Board
- Mercedes Elizalde, Low Income Housing Institute
- Ref Lindmark, King County DOT Market Development
- Steve Louis, Seattle Disability Coalition
- Todd George, Childhaven

### Summary of Findings

Discussion in the King County roundtable revolved around two key themes: economic equity and quality of life. While the group considered all target populations to a certain extent, the participants focused on people with low incomes.

Participants felt strongly that economic equity for low-income individuals and families is an essential consideration when deciding on new funding mechanisms. Participants indicated any revenue source should provide moderately reduced fees for individuals below 60% median income and extremely reduced fees or exemptions for those at or below 30% median income. Multiple participants asserted these reductions are the only way for people with low incomes to maintain mobility.

Participants indicated that funding mechanisms must not negatively impact the quality of life of people with low incomes. If trips like going to the doctor, shopping for groceries, or driving children to school become prohibitively expensive or difficult, people with low incomes may choose to forgo the trip. To remedy this, participants emphasized the importance of investing in the expansion of public transit in neighborhoods where people with low incomes live and work. Participants indicated that, if people cannot afford to drive, their choices in public transit must be adequate.

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## Specific comments from participants

### *Tolling*

- One participant proposed reduced toll rates for groups with low incomes. Other participants echoed this suggestion.
  - Participants agreed tolling not only affects the target populations, but also the people who serve them. A participant suggested a reduced fee be assessed for extremely low-income (below 30%) individuals along with a higher payment, but still reduced fee for moderate-income (below 60%) individuals.
  - Multiple participants suggested using a specialized transponder similar to a *Good To Go!*<sup>TM</sup> pass as a way to implement reduced tolls.
    - Participants agreed people with low incomes would buy this pass in the same way as their higher income counterparts. They would provide proof they are income eligible and would then pay a reduced fee for the transponder and the tolls.
    - All participants agreed a low-income *Good To Go!*<sup>TM</sup> pass should look the same as a regular *Good To Go!*<sup>TM</sup> pass, so as not to draw attention to income status.
  - One participant indicated individuals she works with have such a low income that they would be unable to pay a toll even at a reduced rate.
- One participant recommended a deferred payment plan for people with low incomes who get their toll by mail and cannot pay it right away.
- Multiple participants agreed tolling is problematic until public transit is a more consistently viable alternative.
- One participant commented that being able to afford and travel by the toll lane values that person more than someone from the target population who cannot afford the toll. This participant wanted the psychological and sociological impact of this to be considered.

### *Pay-per-mile*

- Overall, the group was reluctant to engage in a conversation about how to make a pay-per-mile system work. They expressed that, if people with extremely low incomes are required to pay a per mile fee, it will negatively affect their mobility and overall quality of life.
- Multiple participants expressed that target populations would be concerned with the potential lack of privacy.
  - One participant noted that Native American populations and other groups who distrust government are likely to reject the Pay-per-Mile funding mechanism. Other participants agreed with this statement for various other target populations.

- One participant noted that it is already difficult to get many of the target populations to leave their houses. If this fee were to be implemented on all roads, these populations would likely forgo important trips.
  - Participants agreed that other options, such as tolling, would allow people with low incomes to at least continue to travel locally.
- Participants compared pay-per-mile to the gas tax. They agreed that target groups do not think about the gas tax. They conjectured this is because the gas tax is built in to the price of gas and the public is used to paying it.
- Multiple participants agreed that if a pay-per-mile fee were implemented, better public transit would be necessary to mitigate the loss of mobility for low-income populations. Participants agreed public transit needs to increase frequency of trips, safety at stops, and provide a more expansive network of routes.

*“When you are low income, your world is small.  
This will make it even smaller.”*

### *Major Emissions Fees*

- One participant asserted that a lot of people with low incomes drive cars that do not pass the emissions test, making this fee an even greater burden for them.
- One participant wondered if this was worthwhile as it would not be a reliable revenue stream in the future as technology continues to improve.
- One participant saw this as a good revenue source if it replaced the gas tax because it provides more flexibility in how it can be used and it does not add a new fee for target populations.
- Participants called for a reduced fee or exemption for groups with low or moderate incomes.
- One participant suggested a discount for organizations that are working for the public good.

### *Transportation Utility Districts*

- Multiple participants expressed concern for people who live near large nonprofit institutions because they would be charged a higher rate for living in an area that generates a lot of trips.
- One participant also worried that small businesses, especially those owned by target populations, would be overwhelmed by such a fee if their business happened to be located near a large trip generator.
  - Multiple participants supported the idea of large businesses paying higher fees, but participants worried about the ripple effect that could negatively impact target populations in the area.

- One participant worried about this in relation to urban planning. If target populations are charged more for living near places such as transportation hubs or grocery stores, they will be pushed out to more rural areas and will have less mobility.
  - Participants agreed a fee reduction or exemption could mitigate such a concern.
- *Note: The methodology for calculating the transportation utility district fee was likely not well understood by the attendees. Consequently, the concerns expressed in a general sense are useful, but the overall concern about being located near a high auto trip generating property is unfounded.*

### *Impact Fees*

- All participants but one supported impact fees.
- One participant worried that, in Seattle, this fee might exacerbate the unaffordability of the city for low-income residents. This participant worried about target populations being pushed out to more rural areas.

### *General Research and Overview Questions and Comments*

- Participants brought up safety as a key factor in the target populations' aversion to using or liking public transit.
- A few asserted the state should consider an income tax to help pay for transportation.
- One participant wondered if the gas tax could be made more progressive by providing low-income people with gas vouchers.
- One participant suggested that funding sources, especially tolling and pay-per-mile systems, would be less worrisome for target populations if they could afford to live close to grocery stores, schools, and medical attention.
- One participant emphasized that reduced fares would only be more effective if the public transit system serves areas with high concentrations of low-income people

*"Rides are not being patrolled, stops are unsafe. The people I work with have no other means than public transportation, but don't feel comfortable using it."*

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## Pierce County

Meeting Date:	October 8, 2015
Meeting Location:	Center for Urban Waters 326 East D Street Tacoma, WA 98421
Number of Attendees:	1 participant
Facilitator:	Brett Houghton, PRR
Technical presenter:	Ben Bakkenta, PSRC
Note-taker:	Tori Varyu, PRR
Target Populations Represented:	No target populations represented

While multiple organizations working with the target populations expressed interest in attending the roundtable, all were unable to due to scheduling purposes. One attendee from Pierce Transit attended the roundtable, but was not familiar enough with the target populations to provide feedback on how each revenue source might affect them. The Task Force decided to conduct interviews with specific organizations in part to ensure the report would include input from Pierce County.

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## Snohomish County



Meeting Date:	October 9, 2015
Meeting Location:	Everett Public Library 2702 Hoyt Ave Everett, WA 98201
Number of Attendees:	7 participants
Facilitator:	Brett Houghton, PRR
Technical Presenter:	Tim Boesch, CDMSmith
Additional Staff Participation:	Anne Fennessy, Cocker-Fennessy
Note-taker:	Tori Varyu, PRR
Target Populations Represented:	Seniors, Native Americans, and youth

### Attendees:

- Allan Giffen, City of Everett
- Ann Gifford, SNOTRAC
- Kate Tourtellot, Community Transit
- Larry Stevens, Stillaguamish Tribe
- Stefanie Novacek, Snohomish County Long Term Care and Aging
- Ted Wenta, YMCA of Snohomish County
- Tom Hingson, Everett Transit

## Summary of Findings

Participants generally agreed each funding mechanism should consider reductions and exemptions for people with low incomes.

Participants were interested in privacy issues. Participants emphasized that government must consider how the data collection required for different funding mechanisms may affect privacy.

Finally, participants were concerned with some hurdles that might negatively affect the target populations' ability to successfully participate in these programs. A few participants were concerned lack of access to technology would negatively impact seniors and people with low incomes, while others were concerned that complex systems would negatively impact people with limited English proficiency.

## Specific comments from participants

### *Tolling*

*Several participants supported a fee reduction for people with low incomes.*

- A few participants thought the qualification for existing government benefits should determine reduced fee qualification to receive reduced fares.
- One participant suggested that service organizations working for the public good should also get free transponders and reduced fees.
  - One participant suggested organizations qualify for exemptions if they take large number of people off the road, regardless of their for-profit or not-for-profit status.
  - Another participant noted the qualifications needed for toll reductions must be very clear. This participant gave an example of an organization that provides transportation for family and friends to visit seniors. This organization does not necessarily provide conventional help to target populations, but is still important and should still qualify for a reduction.
- Participants worried that people with low incomes or groups without access to technology would be unable to participate in an online payment system and/or rack up expensive fees.
- Multiple participants supported more pictorial signage for people who are not English-literate.



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## Pay-per-mile

- A few participants agreed a pay-per-mile system should have a tiered scale to account for different income levels.
  - Several participants suggested the federal poverty level was a logical bar for exemptions.
  - One participant suggested the rate should be flat so people with low incomes can pay a reduced fare and are more likely to know what to expect to pay.
  - Another participant suggested non-public roads be exempt from the fee to aid those living in rural places.
  - One participant asserted that, even if people with low incomes have a reduced fee, they will still be negatively affected because they are mostly unable to live in urban centers close to where they work.
  - Another participant disagreed with providing reduced rates and argued that providing these reductions would negatively affect public transit because less revenue could be collected for funding transit services.
- One participant suggested that this fee be collected annually based on what the average driver would need to pay. Several participants disagreed with this statement because people in the target populations might be unable to pay all at once.
- Multiple participants were concerned about the issue of privacy.
  - One participant suggested that a GPS unit should be used that only reports the total number of miles a person drives and not locations.
  - Another participant was concerned that if a GPS unit was used, government would still be able to get exact location data, which was a privacy concern for target populations and the general public.
- Participants agreed having a variable rate would allow people with low incomes to travel at cheaper, off-peak hours, but that it would cause a privacy concern with some of the target populations.
- Multiple participants were concerned some members of the target populations would not have smartphones to track their mileage or would not be able to effectively use such technology.

## *Major Emissions Fees*

- One participant was concerned that target populations might own older cars and would therefore be paying more than other populations.
- One participant wondered if this program would realistically raise a significant amount of revenue, or if is more focused on the environmental goal of getting people off the road.

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### *Transportation Utility Districts*

- One participant wondered if target populations should be exempt from this fee. This participant was concerned that target populations are being priced out of urban areas, and this fee would exacerbate that problem.

### *Impact Fees*

- The group did not respond substantively to questions about impact fees.

### *General Questions and Comments*

- One participant suggested that programs should be structured to accommodate for people without access to technology. The same participant suggested that program guidelines need to include flexibility for those without the ability to understand the system.

## Kitsap County



Meeting Date:	October 12, 2015
Meeting Location:	Kitsap County Public Library 1301 Sylvan Way Bremerton, WA 98310
Number of Attendees:	12 participants
Facilitator:	Brett Houghton, PRR
Technical Presenter:	Tim Boesch, CDMSmith
Note-taker:	Tori Varyu, PRR
Target Populations Represented:	Seniors, people with disabilities, and youth

### Attendees:

- Alfred Pinkham, Kitsap AAA Advisory
- Ann Kennedy, Paratransit Services
- Chal Martin, City of Bremerton
- Doug Washburn, Kitsap County Human Services
- Ellen Gustafson, Kitsap Transit
- Greg Wheeler, City of Bremerton
- John Clauson, Kitsap Transit
- John Powers, Kitsap Economic Development
- Martha Dalbeck, Bremerton Ferry Advisory Committee
- Patty Lent, Mayor of the City of Bremerton

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- Sharon Cromely, Kistap AAA Advisory
  - Sunny Wheeler, City of Bremerton

## Summary of Findings

One key theme that emerged from this roundtable discussion was that each transportation funding source should be applied equitably. Participants wanted to see geographic equity in road and system improvements and economic equity for people with low incomes through fee reductions or exemptions. Participants wanted decision-makers to consider that transportation funding mechanisms will affect people with low incomes differently than other target populations, such as seniors.

The group seemed to agree that, regardless of revenue source, there would need to be a lot of public education. They thought education should work to change perceptions about funding mechanisms and help people with limited English proficiency understand how the systems work. Participants agreed educational materials must be present in places easily accessible to target populations, such as libraries and senior centers.

Participants agreed there needs to be an increase in transparency in who is collecting revenue and how it is being used.

Finally, the group thought there should be improved connectivity between different transportation modes. They suggested transportation systems should work together more closely to ensure alternative transportation is a viable option for the target populations.

## Specific comments from participants

### *Tolling*

- Several participants agreed there should be toll reductions or exemptions for people with low incomes.
  - The group further discussed that public transit needs to be more expansive to provide people with a viable alternative to driving and paying tolls. Several participants emphasized that even people with moderate incomes might not be able to pay a toll five days a week.

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### *Pay-per-mile*

- One participant suggested creating a way to prepay based on the average number of miles a person drives in a year. Several other participants agreed with this suggestion.
  - Another participant disagreed, arguing that if a person from the target population is on a fixed income, prepaying would be too much of a burden, and it would be better for these groups to have control over how much they are paying throughout the year.
- Another participant brought up the idea that people with low incomes, people with disabilities, or people who simply live further out of the city centers don't have meaningful alternatives to avoid this fee like people in urban centers would.
  - This participant believed a pay-per-mile fee would be prohibitively expensive for low-income populations.
  - Other participants agreed with this sentiment. One suggested a reduced fee be created for income-qualified individuals.
- One participant proposed reduced fees or exemptions be based solely on a person's ability to pay, rather than having these reductions for seniors and youth. Other participants agreed with this statement, but one wanted to include people with disabilities to the qualified group.
- One participant called for cyclists to pay for their use of the roads along with those driving cars.
- Several participants called for an increase in transparency in who is collecting the money and how it is being used.

### *Major Emissions Fees*

- Participants seemed to agree that, if this provides revenue that is more flexible than revenue collected from the gas tax, it might be good to consider.
- Multiple supported the idea that this accounts for the road usage of electric cars in a way that the gas tax does not.
  - Multiple participants agreed electric cars should pay a fee that supports transportation systems every time they plug into local charging stations, regardless of whether or not the major emissions fee is adopted.

### *Transportation Utility Districts*

- The group did not respond substantively to questions about transportation utility districts.

### *Impact Fees*

- One participant suggested large businesses moving into the area should be rewarded for encouraging new employees to live nearby.
  - One participant disagreed, stating that living near one’s work is not always viable, especially when people with low incomes must find jobs quickly and have little choice in what they choose.
- Multiple participants agreed impact fees should consider how many units are being built in addition to the footprint of the building(s) being built.

### *General Questions and Comments*

- One participant proposed a higher car tab fee as an alternative to the revenue sources discussed so local entities can collect a greater amount of money in a more transparent way.
  - A few participants disagreed with this idea based on the idea that the car tab fee would be disproportionate for those who don’t drive very much.
- One participant suggested the revenue should be specific to the part of the system it is collected from. For example, revenue collected on buses should only go into funding bus systems.
  - Multiple participants disagreed with this comment. One participant argued a region’s transportation system should be considered as a whole and that there will have to be some crossover in funding in order to pay for new projects. This participant suggested changing the perception on current fees to reflect this holistic view. For example, instead of using the term “gas tax” this participant suggested renaming it the “transportation tax” to fund all regional projects. Some participants agreed with this idea.
  - Another participant suggested each mode of the transportation system is not going to be able to sustain itself.
  - Multiple participants expressed concern for geographical equity. Participants did not want all of their transportation fees to only go into building light rail in the Seattle area, but rather wished to ensure such a light rail system or suitable alternative such as bus rapid transit was being built region-wide, including in Kitsap County.
  - Several participants agreed there should be fare reduction for those who regularly utilize public transit rather than driving a single occupancy car.
- A participant suggested transportation systems should be concerned with intermodal connectivity. Participants were especially concerned with the ferry system working in conjunction with bus and rail systems on the Kitsap Peninsula and the region at large.
  - Multiple participants agreed with this statement and felt this would provide target populations meaningful alternatives to driving their own vehicles.

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## Section 5:

# Summary of Interviews

## 5.1 Interview Format

The interviews were conducted by phone. The interviewer began by introducing the Transportation Futures Task Force, addressed the need for new transportation funding strategies in the Puget Sound region, reviewed each funding mechanism, and asked for the participant's thoughts on how each may affect the target populations. Appendix A includes a copy of the interview script.

## 5.2 Summary of Interviews

### Interviewees

- Sam Watson-Alvan, Washington State Department of Health
- Carlin Yoophum and Susan Lee, Refugee Women's Alliance
- Faaluaina Pritchard, Asian Pacific Island Coalition of Pierce County
- Ariele Belo, Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center
- Dona Ponepinto, United Way of Pierce County
- Hilary Stern, Casa Latina
- Dorothy Wong, Chinese Information Services Center
- Gina Yarwood, YWCA Seattle, King and Snohomish

### Summary of Findings

Improving and expanding the public transit system was the most frequently expressed priority for the target populations. Interviewees specified various areas for improvement, including more accessibility, more frequent bus service, easier access to low-income fares, quicker rides, and more bus service to neighborhoods where people with low incomes and limited English proficiency live. Participants were keen on ensuring information about the bus and other public transit is easily available and understandable for limited-English proficient populations.

Interview participants repeatedly expressed that education is essential when there are changes to the transportation system, especially for the target populations. They stressed that education should focus on helping the public understand how the funding is collected, whether and how individual's choices will affect what they pay, and where the money is going. Several conveyed that any education campaign needs to have significant investment in reaching the target populations, especially those who are limited-English proficient. Funding should be available for ongoing education so the target populations can use the existing systems effectively and benefit from the changes.

Another consistent theme was that any new funding mechanisms should be progressive. Interviewees believe Puget Sound area residents with low incomes are currently paying disproportionately into transportation and other government-funded systems with the state's regressive tax structure. Adding another regressive tax or fee will exacerbate the problem.

Interview participants consistently reported that any funding approach needs to include exemptions for the lowest income members of local communities. When individuals expressed support for exemptions, they emphasized that exemption qualification should include considerations of family size and medical expenses.

The funding mechanisms that interview participants consistently found the most promising were impact fees and transportation utility districts. The funding sources they found the most concerning were expanding tolling and implementing the pay-per-mile system. Major emissions fees received mixed responses. However, participants suggested that, if they are coupled with special considerations for people with low incomes, emissions fees might be a good option.

Several participants suggested the Task Force consider taxes on larger corporations and on very high earners.

Interview participants with experience working with rural populations emphasized that equity in rural areas is different than equity in urban areas. Rural residents are not plagued by traffic, but rather by less frequent public transportation services and poor road maintenance.

*“Getting from one’s home to work or to the grocery store should be simple and shouldn’t take too long.”*

## Specific comments from participants

### *Tolling*

- Tolling is regressive in nature and will be unduly harsh on those who cannot walk to supermarkets, schools, and workplaces. Exemptions could help the target populations, but it depends on the details that come with such exemptions.
- People in the target populations can choose to avoid a toll and take surface streets.
- Education and outreach are key for any transportation funding mechanism, but especially for mechanisms like tolling. People do not understand when they are driving on tolled roads and then end up with fees that they can't pay. Implementation of all funding mechanisms should take this into consideration.
- Tolling and pay-per-mile systems will negatively affect people with low incomes because this group generally has to drive a long way to work. Exemptions would be necessary for both of these systems if they are implemented. The income threshold should be higher than ORCA LIFT and the exemption should be a greater portion of the toll or fee.

### *Pay-per-mile*

- A pay-per-mile system is regressive in nature and will be unduly harsh on those who cannot walk to supermarkets, schools, and workplaces. Exemptions could help the target populations, but it depends on the details that come with such exemptions.



- The pay per mile system is the least promising of the mechanisms because it would be very difficult to communicate to people with limited English proficiency. It is also an invasive mechanism which could cause problems for immigrants who have come from countries with oppressive governments.

### Major Emissions Fees

- Major emissions fees are regressive in nature and will be unduly harsh on those who cannot walk to supermarkets, schools, and workplaces. Exemptions could help the target populations, but it depends on the details that come with such exemptions.
- The major emissions fees is the best option if there is a program for people with low incomes, who generally drive more polluting cars.

*“The gap of accessibility needs to be closed and state funding is needed to make this change.”*

### Transportation Utility Districts

- This system could work if the charges were only to commercial properties.
- Transportation utility districts and impact fees are the best solutions in relation to the target populations if both focus on large commercial buildings and communities, and exempt nonprofits. Overall, large businesses should pay for transportation infrastructure as a contribution to public benefit.

“Unless you make these funding mechanisms progressive, they will likely negatively impact the target populations. Even reimbursements would not solve the problem because people with low incomes cannot afford to front the money, even if they will get it back later.”

- Transportation utility districts and impact fees should only charge commercial properties and should exempt residential areas.
- The impact fees and transportation utility districts would be the least impactful mechanisms for the target populations, especially if these fees were focused on areas with high-income residents or corporations.
- The transportation utility districts seem like the most promising mechanism. Commercial properties should be charged more than residential properties so rent doesn't go up too much. Residential properties with low or fixed incomes should be exempted altogether.

### Impact Fees

- All participants but one supported impact fees.
- One participant worried that, in Seattle, this fee might exacerbate the unaffordability of the city for low-income residents. This participant worried about target populations being pushed out to more rural areas.

### General Research and Overview Questions and Comments

- Access vans should take ORCA cards.
- Access vans should be more reliable and timely.

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- The Puget Sound region should look at the Hong Kong public transit system as a model for our transportation system.
  - The target populations need more accessibility and flexibility in public transportation. There should be more stops and a higher frequency of buses near high concentrations of target population residencies.
  - Bus drivers should be educated in how to help people with limited English proficiency. When government implements any new funding mechanisms, there should be an educational campaign to help the public understand how to use the mechanism. The state should also aim to be very transparent in where the funding goes.
  - Tolling, pay-per-mile, major emissions fees, and transportation utility districts would all disproportionately affect the target populations. Exemptions should be implemented for seniors and people with disabilities. Other target populations should be encouraged to carpool, but not be provided exemptions.
  - People with disabilities cannot be stuck in traffic for long periods of time. It needs to be as easy as possible for people with disabilities to get around.
  - Lack of access to public transit routes is a huge problem for the target populations. It is the number one barrier for people to have access to the services they need. There needs to be a more expansive public transit system.
  - The majority of the mechanisms could negatively affect those in the target populations. Exemptions are essential to ensuring these populations do not suffer.
  - Finding a way to tax commercial businesses through the transportation utility districts or through an income tax is the fairest way to collect more money for transportation funding.
  - Free ORCA passes or a sliding rate scale should be utilized to ensure the target populations are not being disproportionately impacted.

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# Appendix A: Transportation Futures Underserved Outreach: Interview Script

## Introduction

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling on behalf of The Transportation Futures Task Force, a collaborative project of King County, WSDOT, and the Puget Sound Regional Council, to gather your feedback.

Is now still a good time to talk? I expect the conversation to take about 45 minutes.

I am collecting information about how certain populations might be affected by new transportation funding sources. Those groups include people with low incomes, communities of color, rural residents, people with disabilities, people with limited-English proficiency, youth, and seniors.

I'm hoping that in our conversation I can learn more about your expertise working with people with \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Which of these groups do you have the most experience working with?

Your responses will be anonymous. In my report, I will list the names of everyone I interview, but individual answers will not be attributed to specific people. Is it OK if I take notes during this conversation to ensure I can accurately relay what you said to the Task Force? This should be an open conversation, and you are welcome to ask me questions, request to move on, or end the conversation at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

To start out, can you tell me what you think are the top priorities for people with \_\_\_\_\_ when considering new transportation funding sources?

[Ask follow-up and clarification questions as needed.]

Great, the Task Force has already identified [repeat back some of their main points] as top priorities.

[Ideas not brought up by the Task Force] are important for us to consider and haven't been identified as top priorities for the Task Force. Do you want to say more about the importance of [their other priorities]?

## Research (optional, if time)

The Task Force has also identified some other considerations for their proposal that you haven't mentioned yet. I'm going to read through some of these considerations, and then I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on what else you think they should include.

- a. Create a fair and equitable funding mechanism

- b. Create a system people can trust
- c. Be mindful of unintended outcomes, like traffic diversion onto local, untolled roads, or low-income people taking longer routes or losing mobility to avoid tolls
- d. Offer viable, affordable alternatives
- e. Use research and education to build acceptance of the new funding system
- f. Educate the public about current transportation funding mechanisms

**Is there anything that you think I am missing from this list that is important to consider in regards to the population(s) you work with?**

## Transportation Funding Mechanisms

Now I'd like to talk about five different potential transportation funding mechanisms and hear your thoughts on each of these options. These ideas are still in development, so please ask questions if you need more information about these different options in order to be able to respond confidently.

1. **Tolling:** Tolling adds a fee either for traveling entire roadways, or for single occupancy vehicles to travel in the express lanes of certain roadways. Tolls can be charged at a variable rate based on peak travel times or the current level of road congestion, or they can be charged at a flat rate each time a driver uses the roadway.
  - How do you think current toll roads affect the population(s) you work with? How would adding more toll roads impact this population? (follow up to ask for both positive and negative impacts)
  - Is there some way any negative effect could be mitigated for these populations?
  - Are there other aspects of this funding mechanism that should be considered in relation to XXX population?
2. **Pay per Mile:** This system charges drivers for every mile they travel. This fee could be charged as a variable rate based on peak travel times, or could be charged at the same flat rate for each mile. Mileage data could be collected through odometer readings, self-reporting, a GPS-based system, or in-vehicle transponders.
  - How do you think implementing a pay per mile system would affect the population(s) you work with? (follow up to ask for both positive and negative impacts)
  - Is there some way any negative effect could be mitigated for these populations?
  - Are there other aspects of this funding mechanism that should be considered in relation to the target populations?
3. **Major Emissions Fee:** This could be structured in a way similar to the carbon tax. Drivers would be charged for the impact their driving has on the environment. The Task Force's conversations have not included specifics about how the fee would be collected. The revenue raised could have a wide variety of uses beyond transportation. (only mention cap-and-trade system if interviewee brings up)

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- How do you think creating a major emissions fee would affect the population(s) you work with? (follow up to ask for both positive and negative impacts)
  - Is there some way any negative effect could be mitigated for these populations?
  - Are there other aspects of this funding mechanism that should be considered in relation to the target populations?

4. **Transportation Utility Districts:** These fees are charged to all property owners within the utility district based on how many ‘trips’ their land use is expected to generate. This revenue source could fund improvement and maintenance of local roads.

- How do you think that implementing fees based on utility districts would affect the population(s) you work with? (follow up to ask for both positive and negative impacts)
- Is there some way any negative effect could be mitigated for these populations?
- Are there other aspects of this funding mechanism that should be considered in relation to the target populations?

5. **Impact Fees:** These are charged to property owners as a flat fee for building a new structure. This fee could be implemented immediately and would support local transportation improvement projects.

- How do you think this would affect the population(s) you work with? (follow-up to ask for both positive and negative impacts)
- Is there some way that any negative effect could be mitigated for these populations?
- Are there other aspects of this funding mechanism that should be considered in relation to the target populations?

OPTIONAL:

Now that we’ve discussed these five different funding options, I’m curious which seem the most promising and the most potentially harmful for the populations you work with. What are your preferences regarding these five options we discussed: tolling, pay per mile, major emissions fee, transportation utility districts, and impact fees?

## Conclusion

Is there anything else you think the Task Force should consider when making recommendations on these transportation funding mechanisms?

Thank you very much for your time. When the report is done, we will send you a copy.

If you think of any other feedback later on, please feel free to send it to Tori, who coordinated our interview today, and we will make sure to get it into the report.



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