

# If Congestion is the Problem is Pricing Part of the Solution?



GREATER WASHINGTON  
Board of Trade

# Is Congestion a Problem?

- Yes it is for most people....It depends on where you live and where you work
- And it depends on your non-work travel
- Regionally -- nation's 3<sup>rd</sup> worst traffic congestion (LA and SF worse)

# Congestion

- Every year we are stuck in traffic for 84 hours – the equivalent of a two week vacation
- Congestion costs Washingtonians \$2.3 billion annually in wasted time, fuel, etc.
- It results in problems for our quality of life, economy, and safety

# How Do We Get To Work?

## 2000 U.S. Census – COG Analysis

■ SOV	1,587,500	67%
■ Carpool	315,400	13
■ Transit	276,500	12
■ Walk	72,800	3
■ Work at Home	87,420	4
■ Bike	7,532	--
■ Other	21,330	1
■ Total	2,368,482	100%

- 80% of work trips are by auto...SOV or carpool...95% of all trips (work and non-work) are by auto
- Pricing options need to focus on roads given the volume of trips...
- “I rob banks because that’s where the money is” (Willy Sutton)

- But.....Pricing incentives should also help increase the non-auto share of daily trips
- The Board of Trade actively advocates Metrocheck, telework, and transit oriented development to encourage walking and biking and reduce road traffic

# Is Pricing Part of the Solution?

- We make transportation pricing decisions everyday.....
- Take transit or drive?
- Pay \$4.50 for the Dulles Greenway or tough it out on Route 7?
- Move from Loudoun to Arlington?

# HOT Lanes are a Great Start

- “Virginia police and highway officials say that fines (for HOV violators) -- \$50 for a first offense and up to \$500 for repeat violations – create little deterrence in a region of high salaries where many people’s time has become more valuable than their money.” Washington Post, May 18, 2003

- “Troopers have found dolls in child safety seats and ball-cap wearing mannequins propped up in the passenger seats”
- 35% of I-95 HOV lanes in Newington had only one occupant
- 38% of vehicles had lone drivers on I-66
- 28% lone drivers on the Dulles Toll Road

# HOT Lanes – Rubik's Cube Solved?

- Regional HOT lanes concept addresses auto travel – where the need is greatest
- Congestion-free HOV / HOT lanes and less congested general purpose lanes....
- Provision for congestion-free transit (BRT)
- No money? No problem...Is self-funding from tolls – 50%

- Minimizes footprint by using existing infrastructure and existing corridor
- Minimizes community / environmental disruption
- Air quality benefits
- Pricing variability will minimize congestion

# Board of Trade Policy

- Support HOT lanes on existing HOV lanes
- Support HOT lanes if an additional new lane
- Use HOT lane revenue for transit in the HOT lane corridor



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