

Curbing Congestion

**Improving Traffic Flow, Transit,
and Transportation Funding
Through Value Pricing**

**Summary of the Work of the Minnesota
Value Pricing Advisory Task Force**

January 4, 2002

State and Local Policy Program

Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

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Executive Summary

The Minnesota value pricing advisory task force is a diverse group of stakeholders that seeks to build political support for implementation of a value pricing demonstration project. Value pricing refers to the use of electronically collected peak-period tolls to manage rush hour traffic flow and to provide revenue for enhanced transit service, limited highway expansion, and other transportation improvements.

The task force believes that while value pricing cannot solve the congestion problem by itself, that it can, when combined appropriately with other policies, help traffic flow more smoothly while helping to improve the environment and make transportation system financing more equitable.

> VALUE PRICING REFERS TO THE USE OF ELECTRONICALLY COLLECTED PEAK-PERIOD TOLLS TO MANAGE RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC FLOW AND TO PROVIDE REVENUE FOR ENHANCED TRANSIT SERVICE, LIMITED HIGHWAY EXPANSION, AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS.

The task force bases its recommendations on the following findings:

- Growing levels of traffic congestion impose significant costs and threaten the long-term economic prosperity of the region.
- Pricing will not solve this problem alone; it requires increased investment in transit service and highway infrastructure.
- Peak-period tolls could help to reduce congestion and provide the revenue needed to make these investments.
- By helping us avoid or postpone the need for expensive capacity expansions, peak-period tolls could ultimately reduce the total cost that people pay for transportation.

The task force considered the growing congestion problem, problems with current transportation financing, some proposed pilot projects, and the anticipated costs and benefits of value pricing and other congestion management alternatives. The task force created a list of criteria for evaluating projects, recommended three possible pricing concepts, and discussed concerns and potential mitigation strategies.

The task force supports an application for funding through the Federal Highway Administration's Value Pricing program to implement the Crosstown Commons reconstruction pricing project described in this report. However, if the Crosstown project does not gain public and political approval, then the task force recommends that other projects, including other reconstruction projects, be pursued.

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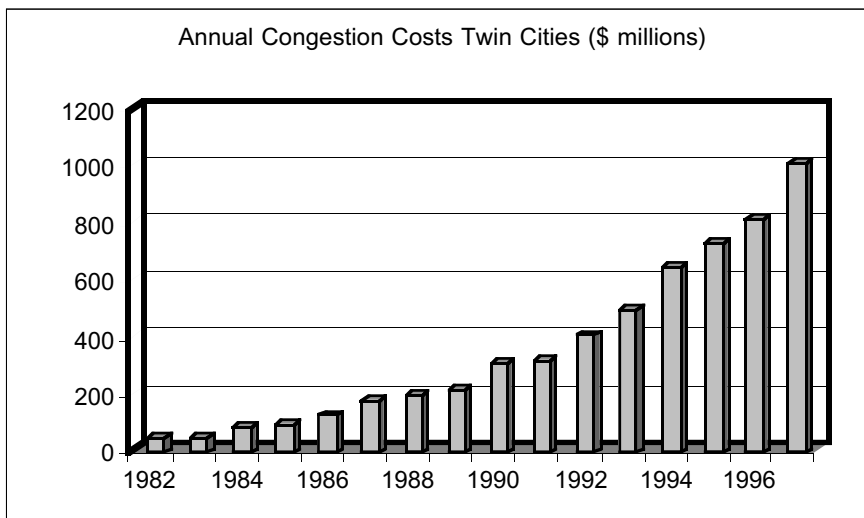
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Why Pricing?

According to the Texas Transportation Institute's study of congestion in U.S. metropolitan areas, congestion is growing in the Twin Cities area at one of the fastest rates in the United States. The 2001 Civic Confidence Survey of the Twin Cities showed that traffic congestion is the number one concern of residents. Local businesses are also concerned about the impact that congestion has on both their costs of doing business, and on the region's ability to attract and retain skilled workers. There is fear that if nothing is done these problems could eventually lead to a reduction in the economic competitiveness of the region as a whole.

The congestion problem is compounded by budget and environmental constraints, making major expansions of highways or transit difficult in many cases. These constraints underscore the importance of giving serious consideration to all available options, including market-based solutions such as the use of electronically collected peak-period tolls to manage rush hour traffic flow. While no single policy can solve the congestion problem, peak-period road pricing can both improve the effectiveness of more traditional strategies such as highway expansion and transit service improvements, while providing some of the necessary revenue to implement these other options.



> CONGESTION IS GROWING IN THE TWIN CITIES AREA AT ONE OF THE FASTEST RATES THE UNITED STATES.

Congestion and Transportation Finance > > >

Congestion is ultimately a problem of too many people driving at the same time. There are two separate but related issues: how much and when people choose to drive, and how much capacity can be provided with existing transportation revenues. Peak-period road pricing can help to address both these issues.

When highways are expanded and the new capacity is provided for free, it tends to fill up due to a phenomenon known as the "principle of triple convergence." When congestion is bad, people take action to try to avoid it, by changing their routes, modes, or times of travel. But when congestion is relieved through highway expansion or other means, these "evasive actions" become less necessary, so some people go back to their old way of doing things. Triple convergence means that new capacity tends to be filled by new users from three sources: changing route, changing mode (e.g., bus to car), and changing the time of day of travel. Some also refer to this as "induced demand;" that is, the total amount of traffic will increase when new capacity is made available.

> FUEL TAXES PAY FOR LESS THAN HALF OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURE. ABOUT 30% IS PAID FOR BY PROPERTY AND SALES TAXES.	

A separate but related issue has to do with how roads are paid for. About 30% of the money that local governments and the state spend on transportation is collected from sources such as the property and sales tax, which have nothing to do with how much people drive. The only transportation-related tax that is based at all on the amount of driving is the fuel tax; which, even counting both the state and federal gas taxes, covers only about 45% of total government transportation expenditures. All of these taxes are regressive; that is, they take a higher percentage of the income of poor people than of people with higher incomes. Overall, revenue is barely adequate to maintain the current system, let alone implement needed improvements; and it is likely to become even more inadequate and detached from driving choices, as vehicles in coming years are likely to use substantially less gas.

Road pricing can help to address both these issues. By creating a more direct link between travel choices and the cost to the driver, drivers have a more compelling reason to make different choices about how and when they travel. Higher charges

during rush hours would lead people to make optional trips at other times of day, to use the bus instead of driving, or to carpool or combine trips to save money. This would reduce rush-hour congestion and thus delay the need for highway expansion. It would also provide the revenue for improving transit service, and for highway expansion when it does become necessary.

Direct road pricing could ultimately reduce the cost of transportation by making it possible for people to choose what roads they use and when they use them in order to save money. Imagine, as an analogy, if restaurant meals were paid for through taxes. Then people would have no reason not to eat every meal at restaurants, since eating at home would not be cheaper. But to pay for the huge increase in restaurant dining, taxes would have to be raised. Ultimately those "free" restaurant meals would cost far more than the current system, where people choose what they consume and pay accordingly.

While such a system might sound absurd as a way of paying for food, it is a fairly accurate description of the way we pay for roads. Peak-period freeway capacity is very expensive to provide, and there is no reason for drivers to refrain from using it. Because there is no way for drivers to save money by making different choices, they end up sitting in congestion, or paying taxes to build capacity that might only be used for an hour or two a day. Because peak-period pricing reduces congestion by rewarding people for making less costly choices, it can ultimately make transportation less expensive for everyone, by avoiding or delaying the need for capacity enhancements. When peak-period tolls are used to replace other taxes they can provide congestion reduction at a small fraction of the cost of highway expansion or transit alternatives.

> DIRECT ROAD PRICING	
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How Pricing Works > > >

Modern road pricing systems do not use manual toll booths; tolls are collected electronically. While there are different technologies in use, the most common is a small tag (transponder) in the vehicle, which functions as a sort of cash card. Money is credited and programmed into the transponder and tolls are deducted as the vehicle passes at full speed under a gantry. This is the system that is used in California and other states. Alternately, the transponder could be read like a bar code, and an account maintained in a central computer system, avoiding the need for users to "recharge" their transponders.

> MODERN SYSTEMS	
COLLECT TOLLS ELEC-	
TRONICALLY AT FULL	
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THERE ARE NO LINES	
AT TOLL PLAZAS.	

Victoria, Australia also uses transponders, as well as "day passes" based on automated license plate reading technology. Day passes allow users without a transponder to pay the toll by telephone up to 24 hours after using the system, which is especially advantageous to out-of-town drivers and other infrequent system users. Singapore uses transponders with a cash or credit card inserted. Whoever drives the car inserts his or her own card into the transponder, so the tolls are charged to the driver rather than to the vehicle.

To achieve peak-period traffic reductions, tolls are higher during rush hours and lower or nonexistent at other times. There are two main variations on this theme. One option is a preset schedule of tolls, which may rise and fall over the course of the peak travel period, but which are fixed in advance. This has the advantage of being predictable, but isn't adjustable if there is too much or too little traffic. The other option is dynamic pricing, in which the tolls are changed on the fly to maintain a high but free-flowing level of traffic; the current toll is announced on electronic displays prior to the beginning of the tolled section. This has the advantage of being flexible to maintain the best traffic flow, but the disadvantage is that drivers don't necessarily know what the toll will be before beginning the trip.

Value Pricing in the United States > > >

There are two major types of value pricing projects currently operating in the United States. The first type are projects which allow single-occupant vehicles to pay for access to special lanes that are free for transit and have a reduced price for carpools. On State Road 91 in Orange County, California, new lanes were constructed in the median of an existing (free) expressway; these new lanes are tolled using a fixed-rate schedule. On Interstate 15 in San Diego, existing carpool/transit lanes were underused; a value pricing system was set up to allow single-occupant vehicles to pay a toll to use the excess capacity. The tolls on this highway vary based on the level of traffic. The Katy Freeway in Houston also has a carpool lane; three-person carpools can use it for free, while two-person carpools can use it by paying a toll.

The other major type of project involves higher peak period tolls on facilities that already charge tolls. Lee County, Florida, uses off-peak discounts to avoid congestion on area toll bridges. Recently, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey began charging slightly higher rush-hour tolls on the bridges and tunnels leading into Manhattan.

> MAJOR U.S. VALUE PRICING PROJECTS:	
• ORANGE COUNTY, CA	
• SAN DIEGO, CA	
• HOUSTON TX	
• LEE COUNTY, FL	
• PORT AUTHORITY, NY-NJ	

The Value Pricing Task Force

Using a grant from the Federal Highway Administration Value Pricing Program, the Humphrey Institute and the Minnesota Department of Transportation convened a task force to explore the feasibility of peak-period road pricing as a congestion management and transportation finance tool in the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

As evidenced by previous value pricing projects and studies, market-based solutions require public and political support from key stakeholders in order to be successful. For this reason, Minnesota value pricing study staff recruited members of the Advisory Task Force to represent a broad array of interests and positions. The task force held an open dialogue about market-based alternatives with the intent of developing a solution that would be effective and feasible for all stakeholders.

The task force brought together 37 key stakeholders from across the Twin Cities; about 25 attended at least one meeting. Members included elected state officials, local government leaders and staff, and leaders in the business, environmental, and civic arenas. Both supporters and opponents of pricing were invited to participate. The mission of the task force was:

- To discuss the role of pricing and market-based solutions in a regional context,
- To recommend a value pricing pilot project(s), if they considered that pricing strategies had merit,
- To assist in creating a constituency of support for pricing in general and for selected project(s).

The task force met four times; there were also two subcommittee meetings to discuss details of project selection and marketing. All of the meetings consisted of a combination of presentations by value pricing staff and associates, and discussion by task force members. The first two meetings were more strongly weighted toward presentation, as staff introduced the task force members to some of the facts and ideas supporting value pricing. The last two meetings were much more geared to task force discussion, as they used the information presented in the first two

meetings along with their own experiences, knowledge, and relationships with stakeholders to determine which demonstration projects would have the most merit.

Agendas of the four meetings are in the appendix to this report.

This report presents the process, findings, concerns, and recommendations of the task force as a group. There was general consensus among the members of the group about the overall findings and recommendations that are documented in this report, with the understanding that many details still have to be worked out. As would be expected in a group with diverse participants there were some disagreements and concerns, which are also documented here.

Project Evaluation Criteria > > >

The task force began its discussion of possible pricing projects by developing a set of criteria for evaluating the desirability of the various possible projects. These criteria then served as general objectives to guide the task force as it narrowed the list of possible projects.

The primary criterion was that the project had to be politically feasible. In general this meant that the project had to address a known, significant transportation problem; and that this problem did not have other solutions with widespread appeal. Given the uncertainty and concern about public opposition to tolls, the task force felt that people would not want to consider pricing except when a problem was severe and more traditional solutions would clearly be inadequate or inapplicable. The projects that passed the test of political feasibility were then discussed in more depth within the context of a more detailed set of criteria developed by the task force:

> THE PRIMARY	
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ICALLY FEASIBLE.	

- The project should benefit public health, safety, and the environment.
- The project should provide positive choices for people.
- The project should generate economic benefits (revenues, system efficiency, leverage other funds).
- The project should reduce peak period demand and mitigate an existing transportation problem.
- The project should enhance multi-modal transportation and travel reliability.
- The project should have private sector support.
- The project should represent a public education and/or market research opportunity and it should be transferable to other locations.
- The project should reflect the larger transportation and land use vision.

Concerns > > >

Task force members raised a number of concerns about value pricing and how it would be implemented. These concerns could be generally grouped into two broad categories: lack of options, and equity.

Concerns about lack of options took a variety of forms. The point of peak-period road pricing is to divert some trips to other times, modes or routes, but by definition this can only work if other times, modes and routes are available. Some task force members noted, for example, that commercial traffic may not have the flexibility that passenger traffic often does.

One concern that was raised was that if all the roads are congested, then there are, in essence, no alternate routes. In some places this is a problem now, and it is likely to become more of a problem as population continues to increase. A related concern was that diverting traffic onto local streets creates its own set of problems that should be considered more explicitly. And some task force members wondered if the relative lack of congestion resulting from successful peak-period pricing would cause needed highway capacity improvements to be delayed too long.

Another aspect of the lack of options had to do with transit, or the absence of transit. While this was felt to be a problem, task force members also felt that pricing roads could provide the revenue to improve transit options, as well as an incentive to use them. The agreed-upon need for better road and transit options highlighted the point that road pricing needs to be used in conjunction with, not in place of, other options.

Equity is a major concern with pricing projects. This can take several forms: that people that use certain roads have to pay extra while people that use other roads don't, that the toll places a greater burden on the poor than on the rich, and even that toll lanes should not be available because wealthier people would gain an unfair advantage by being able to pay to bypass congestion. However, studies in California show that the income distribution of toll-road users is not that different from the general population. People use the lanes when they are in a hurry, not every day. Higher-income drivers use them relatively more, but all incomes use them to some extent.

> ROAD PRICING NEEDS TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH, NOT IN PLACE OF, OTHER OPTIONS SUCH AS TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS AND LIMITED HIGHWAY EXPANSION.	

There are several ways concerns about income equity could be dealt with:

- Most commonly, toll revenues are used to subsidize transit, or improve transit service.
- Very low-income households could be given some free passes.
- More generally, tolls could be based on household income in a progressive way, like the income tax. An individual's rate could be programmed into the transponder.

A final important point to bear in mind with regard to income equity is that, as discussed earlier in the context of transportation finance, the current system of paying for roads places a larger relative burden on lower income people, even though they use the system relatively less. Given the nature of the existing transportation finance system, a well-designed system based on peak-period tolls would very likely improve the lot of most low-income households.

Perhaps more problematic is "geographic equity." Placing a peak-period toll on a single road or bridge would seem to be unfair to the users of that facility, in the absence of some particular advantage that the toll might create. In a hypothetical region-wide pricing system, peak-period tolls could be offset by reductions in other taxes, keeping overall transportation costs about the same. However, a small demonstration project would collect tolls from the users of the project without providing any offsetting reduction in other taxes. To offset this problem, revenues from pricing projects should be used only for transportation enhancements in the affected corridor. This would give the tolled road advantages that it would not have as a free road, such as better and safer traffic flow, and more transit and other alternatives to driving.

> TOLLED ROADS MUST HAVE ADVANTAGES OVER FREE ROADS, SUCH AS BETTER TRANSIT SERVICE AND FASTER AND SAFER TRAFFIC FLOW.	

Project Summaries

The task force's efforts to find a demonstration project for the Twin Cities started out with a discussion of four basic types of projects:

- Spot pricing: imposing a toll at a specific location
- Corridor pricing: tolling a length of highway, with the toll depending on the distance traveled.
- Access-based pricing: making it possible to pay a toll to bypass congestion, such as single-occupant access to carpool lanes, or a ramp-meter bypass
- Vehicle-based pricing: using geographic positioning systems (GPS) to charge tolls to a specific vehicle based on time of day and location. These tolls would be charged in lieu of other fees.

A task force subcommittee initially considered a list of 12 possible projects in these four categories, but decided that it would be more productive to focus attention on three projects that had the most apparent political feasibility. The full list of potential projects is shown in the appendix to this report. The Crosstown commons reconstruction project had the broadest appeal to the group. It is a highly visible project for which all of the available solutions seem to have serious shortcomings. It was felt that pricing here had the potential to have a visible, long-lasting impact on transportation in the area. Finally, one of the task force members was a state legislator who had been involved in the initial legislative controversy on this project, and was willing to initiate political discussions on this project.

While the other two projects were considered worthwhile as well, they seemed to be much more limited in their ability to impact traffic in a visible way. The Stillwater bridge does not carry much traffic (compared to the Crosstown), while the I-394 HOV lanes did not appear to have enough excess capacity to make much difference to traffic flow on the other lanes.

The I-35W–Crosstown Reconstruction > > >

The Crosstown Commons is a one-mile common section of I-35W and TH 62 bordering Minneapolis and Richfield. The approaches to the Commons are extremely congested and experience long back ups in all directions for up to 7 hours per day, both because of lack of capacity and the large amount of weaving. Mn/DOT has programmed the reconstruction of the Crosstown Commons in conjunction with the expansion of I-35W in that area to reduce the weaving. Due to limited financial resources and right-of-way, the proposed reconstruction plan would have eliminated the TH 62 Crosstown traffic during a four-year reconstruction period. As a result of the long period of disruption and the significant loss of capacity during that time, the 2001 Minnesota Legislature placed a one-year moratorium on starting the project. The legislature also required Mn/DOT to study the possibility of using pricing during the construction period.

The original pilot project proposal involved reconstructing the Crosstown Commons in a wider right-of-way, thus allowing traffic to be maintained during reconstruction. Pricing would be implemented in the corridor to manage traffic demand, with the revenue used in part to improve transit options. Subsequently, Mn/DOT developed a new design which kept the highway open during construction. The pricing demonstration subsequently evolved to focus more on implementing pricing as part of the new design. The objectives of pricing in this case are to manage traffic flow and improve transit, as before, but with more emphasis on using the revenue to help pay for the higher costs of the new design.

> THE OBJECTIVES OF PRICING ON THE CROSSTOWN COMMONS ARE TO MANAGE TRAFFIC FLOW AND IMPROVE TRANSIT, AND ALSO TO USE THE REVENUE TO HELP PAY FOR THE HIGHER COSTS OF THE NEW DESIGN.	

I-394 SOV Buy-in > > >

I-394 is a radial freeway linking downtown Minneapolis with its western suburbs. In the peak direction, there are two general-purpose through-lanes and one high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane. High mixed-lane demand and capacity bottlenecks cause daily backups in both directions.

A pilot project would involve allowing single-occupant vehicles (SOVs) and possibly commercial vehicles to use the excess HOV lane capacity for a variable mileage-based price (calculated to maintain acceptable levels of service for HOVs). HOVs and buses would continue to use the lanes free of charge.

The desired effect of value pricing would be to fully use the HOV lane capacity, thus increasing the efficiency of the facility. Users who need a fast trip would be able to purchase it.

Stillwater Bridge > > >

Severe traffic congestion in downtown Stillwater, safety problems on approach roadways, and delays caused by the operation of the Stillwater Lift Bridge have spurred the discussion of a new bridge crossing in Stillwater for many years. "Rush hour" delays and weekend backups, especially during the tourist season, frustrate residents and visitors alike. The bridge is currently operating at capacity 3-4 hours per day.

A pilot project at this location would involve a variable or fixed price electronic toll for crossing the bridge. Transponders would be made available to all potential users of the bridge. Gantries would be installed at the approach to each direction of the bridge. A facility for non-regular users (e.g., tourists) to purchase tolls would be provided nearby but off the facility. High-occupancy vehicles (HOVs) and buses would be able to cross the bridge free of charge.

The desired effect of value pricing would be to reduce the number of peak period trips by diverting trips to off-peak periods or to the I-94 crossing.

Conclusion

In addition to choosing the Crosstown Commons reconstruction as a potential pricing demonstration project for the Twin Cities, the task force also developed some other more general statements about the role of pricing in transportation policy.

Statement of Purpose > > >

As a diverse group of stakeholders, we seek to identify and build sufficient political support for implementation of a value pricing demonstration project. We define value pricing as using electronically collected peak-period tolls to manage rush hour traffic flow and to provide revenue for transit, highway expansion, and other complementary policies.

We believe that while value pricing cannot solve the congestion problem by itself, that it can, when combined appropriately with other policies, help traffic flow more smoothly while helping to improve safety and the environment and make transportation system financing more equitable.

Findings > > >

The task force bases its recommendations on the following findings:

- Growing levels of traffic congestion impose significant costs on individuals, businesses, and the quality of life in our communities, and threaten the long-term economic prosperity of the region. Doing nothing will be a costly option in the long term.
- Pricing will not solve this problem alone; it requires:
 - That there is excess capacity somewhere for some trips to divert to; that is, increased investment in highway infrastructure is needed.
 - That there are alternatives to driving on tolled roads; that is, increased investment in transit is needed.
- Peak-period tolls could help to reduce congestion and provide the revenue needed to make these investments.
- By helping us avoid or postpone the need for expensive capacity expansions, peak-period tolls could ultimately *reduce* the total cost that people pay for transportation.

Recommendations > > >

We recommend that Mn/DOT apply for funding through the FHWA Value Pricing program to implement one or more value pricing projects. Our first choice is to use pricing as a travel demand management strategy during reconstruction of the Crosstown Commons. However, we recognize that this project cannot move forward without public and political approval. If the Crosstown project cannot gain this approval, then we recommend that another reconstruction project or one of the other projects in this report be pursued.

> WHILE VALUE PRICING CANNOT SOLVE THE CONGESTION PROBLEM BY ITSELF, IT CAN, WHEN COMBINED APPROPRIATELY WITH OTHER POLICIES, HELP TRAFFIC FLOW MORE SMOOTHLY WHILE HELPING TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND MAKE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM FINANCING MORE EQUITABLE.	
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Appendices

Task Force Members

Carol Flynn, Chair

Senator Roy Terwilliger

Representative Mary Liz Holberg

Kevin McHenry
Office of State Senator Leo Foley

Hubert "Buck" Humphrey IV
Office of Mayor Sharon Sayles-Belton

Deputy Mayor Susan Kimberly
City of St. Paul

Natonia Johnson, Office of Hennepin
County Commissioner Mark Stenglein

Mayor Mary E. Anderson
City of Golden Valley

Mayor Mary Hamann-Roland
City of Apple Valley

Carolyn Rodriguez
Metropolitan Council

Joan Molenaar, Council Member
City of Champlin

Mayor Steve Larson
City of New Brighton

John G. Hoeschler, Planning Commission,
City of Gem Lake

Henry Zweber, Council Member
City of New Market

Ron Lifson , Vice President/General
Manager, LDI Fibres

James Wafler, President
Highway Construction Industry Council

Neil H. Libson, Director Office Facilities
SuperValu

William E. Goins, Worldwide Account
Manager, FedEx Corporate Services

Fred Corrigan, Executive Vice President
The Minnesota Transportation Alliance

Amber Backhaus
Minnesota Trucking Association

Jerry Olson , Sr. Vice President and
Sr. Counsel, Colle & McVoy Marketing
Communications

Frank Brust
Minneapolis Downtown Council

Ron Marien, President
Bloomington Airport Council, Minneapolis
Regional Chamber of Commerce

Bill Droessler
1000 Friends of Minnesota

Richard Rolle
Urban League

Matthew Hollinshead, Coordinator
Minnesotans for Sustainable
Transportation

Daron Van Helden
AAA Minnesota/Iowa

Dave Van Hattum, Project Administrator
Downtown Minneapolis TMO

Bob Vanasek
Metro Inter-County Association

Lyle Wray, Executive Director
Citizens League

Full List of Potential Projects

The task force started with a list of 12 possible value pricing projects, but narrowed the list to three that were thought to be particularly interesting, and more politically feasible. The original list follows.

Spot Locations >

Lowry Tunnel (Minneapolis)

Stillwater Bridge (Stillwater)

Crosstown Commons (Minneapolis/Richfield)

Wakota Bridge (Newport/South St. Paul)

Congested Commuter Corridors >

I-94 (St. Cloud to I-494)

TH 169 (I-494 to CSAH 101)

I-35E (I-94 to I-694)

I-35W (TH 13 to I-94)

Pricing on Expanded Corridors >

I-494 (I-394 to Minnesota River)

I-94 (CSAH 152 to I-494, Brooklyn Park/Maple Grove)

SOV Buy-In >

I-394 HOT Lane

I-35W HOT Lane

The Task Force Process

Recruitment > > >

The Task Force was gathered by active recruitment. Some organizations were selected by the project managers as necessary for the Task Force, and were invited to nominate a member or staff person. All sitting state legislators were invited to join, eight did so. Business leaders were recruited based on recommendations from other groups or individuals familiar with the community. City, county, and regional government representatives were recruited through a postcard survey sent to all 1,000+ government leaders in the metropolitan region.

An attempt was made to find people with previous experience in transportation policy issues—often service on another committee of this type. Although an attempt was made to recruit open minded, neutral parties and previous proponents of pricing, project managers also recruited some opponents of pricing.

Meeting 1: February 9, 2001 > > >

This meeting was mostly focused on the task force members and value pricing staff becoming acquainted, and on presentations covering some of the facts and ideas behind value pricing. The meeting lasted two and a half hours and covered the following agenda:

- Purpose of the Advisory Task Force
- Congestion in the Twin Cities: What is the Problem (Group Discussion)
- Defining the Problem (Three presentations)
- What is Value Pricing? (Presentation)
- Buying Time Video
- Operating Value Pricing Projects and Proposals (Jennifer DuBord)

Meeting 2: June 5, 2001 > > >

The second meeting continued with presentations about various aspects of value pricing, and at the end began the discussion of developing evaluative criteria for choosing a demonstration project. The meeting lasted five and a half hours, and agenda items included:

- Current Value Pricing Projects (Presentation)
- Congestion news videos
- Full Costs of Twin Cities Transportation (Presentation)
- Transportation Finance (Presentation)
- Value Pricing Benefits and Policy Alternatives (Presentation)
- Development of Evaluation Criteria

Meeting 3: July 31, 2001 > > >

The primary focus of this meeting was on discussing potential projects and choosing a project. The original intent had been to use evaluation criteria to rate projects quantitatively. However, it came to seem that any such rating would depend somewhat arbitrarily on the judgment of the raters. Also, the rating would depend on the specific way the project was defined, while not taking advantage of improvements that might be possible.

It was decided to approach the evaluation of the projects by having the task force break into groups, each of which would discuss one project. Each group spent some time defining its project in the most appealing way and discussed how the project might be sold to a broader audience. Each group then attempted to "sell" its project to the whole task force. At the end of these presentations a general discussion took place and a vote was taken.

This meeting lasted five and a half hours, and was mostly discussion with a few short presentations at the beginning. The agenda included:

- International value pricing projects (Presentation)
- Minnesota value pricing market research (Presentation)
- Equity issues in value pricing (Presentation)
- Descriptions of four projects
- Small group discussions of projects
- Presentation of projects by small group representatives
- Large group discussion of projects

Meeting 4: November 30, 2001 > > >

This meeting focused mostly on the Crosstown project and what task force members could do to help move it forward. The meeting lasted five and a half hours, and included the following agenda items:

- Crosstown project update
- Crosstown proposal description
- Discussion of (this) task force report
- Outreach plan and future task force roles

Minnesota Value Pricing Project Staff and Associates

State and Local Policy Program, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota >

- Lee Munnich, Project leader
- Gary Barnes
- Marit Enerson
- Michael Rentz
- Todd Anderson
- Leah Goldstein, strategic planning and evaluation consultant

Minnesota Department of Transportation >

- Adeel Lari
- Kenneth Buckeye

Metropolitan Council >

- Mark Filipi
- Carl Ohrn

SRF Consulting >

- Ferrol Robinson
- Steve Wilson
- Jonathon Erlich