

HRPDC Interoffice Memorandum

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TO: Dwight L. Farmer, Executive Director/Secretary

BY: Camelia Ravanbakht, Ph.D.
Principal Transportation Engineer

RE: Value Pricing and Interstate Tolling in Hampton Roads – Summary of Events

Per our discussions and for your use, the following is a summary of events regarding Value Pricing in Hampton Roads.

- The HRPDC staff developed and made a presentation on a Congestion Pricing Proposal to the Hampton Roads MPO in October 1997. The MPO endorsed the proposal and requested that the proposal be submitted to VDOT. The proposal included charging a fee to single occupant vehicles (SOVs) to use the HOV lanes in Hampton Roads.
- VDOT submitted a request to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on February 17, 1998 for approval of the last Federal Congestion Pricing Pilot Program slot established by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). This proposal also included the Public-Private Partnership proposal to build an additional tube at the Midtown Tunnel and charge tolls on the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels.
- The FHWA, on May 21, 1998 responded favorably to VDOT, indicated that they would issue a “conditional commitment of the last Interstate tolling slot available as part of the Pilot Program.” The commitment would be for one year to allow the state, local, and private sector partners and FHWA to finalize a revised statement of work. The May 1998 Conditional Commitment from FHWA also included High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes on I-64 reversible HOV lanes.
- VDOT and its consultant completed Phase I Focus Group research findings report in December 1998. It appeared that there was citizen support for the HOT Lane Proposal.
- In early 1999, VDOT halted its efforts to complete the next phase of HOT lane analysis and ultimately did not respond to FHWA within the one-year conditional commitment period.
- TEA-21 added additional Value Pricing Pilot Program slots of up to 15 slots.
- On April 18, 2001, the HRPDC staff made a presentation to the MPO regarding the HOT Lanes/Value Pricing status report in the country.
- In Mid 2001, VDOT requested the staff at the Research Council to study the feasibility of Value Pricing in Hampton Roads. On December 19, 2001, the Research Council staff presented to the MPO the results of that study. The study concluded of the 5 keys to success for HOT lanes, Hampton Roads meets only one being excess capacity on the HOV lanes. The study further concluded that at some point in the future the area might have conditions conducive for HOT lanes.

- In 2003, the HRMPO staff completed the Downtown Tunnel Traffic Management Plan Study as requested by the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth. Results of the study indicated that there may be an opportunity to incorporate “value pricing” as a mechanism and Demand Management tool to solve existing congestion at the Downtown Tunnel.
- Under SAFETEA-LU, the Value pricing Pilot Program is continued, funded at \$59 million through FY 2009, to support the costs of implementing up to 15 variable pricing pilot programs nationwide to manage congestion and benefit air quality, energy use, and efficiency. Virginia is one of the 15 slots for variable pricing implementation in NO. VA and Hampton Roads.
- VDOT is currently completing a research project designed to identify, examine and assess responses to the potential introduction of variable priced tolling on two tunnels in the Hampton Roads’ area: the Downtown Tunnel and the Midtown Tunnel. This research project consists of the following phases:
 - Phase I: Qualitative online interviews among general travelers/commuters that drive across bridges and tunnels in Hampton Roads
 - Phase II: Focus groups and one-on-one interviews with commuters and businesses that rely on commercial trucks or other commercial vehicles
 - Phase III: Quantitative telephone survey among pilot program test area travelers/ commuters that use the two Norfolk-Portsmouth tunnels
 - Phase IV: Overall Report & Implications/Recommendations