

City of Seattle
Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) Summary Sheet
Cover Sheet and Questions

Department/Office: Office of Sustainability and Environment
Name of policy, program, etc. analyzed: Equitable approaches to Road Pricing
Dates of RET process: 1/21-12/21

(Important to know: the final RET Report will be available in Q1 2022)

Names and titles of key staff that led this RET process:

- Edie Gilliss, Citywide Climate Coordinator, OSE
- Kristin Brown, Climate Communications Advisor, OSE
- Joanna Valencia, Revenue & Capital Development Manager, DOT
- Annya Pintak, Transportation Equity Program Manager, DOT
- Lisa Chen, Equity & Environment Manager, OSE

Equitable Approaches to Road Pricing RET Summary Sheet Questions

1. Describe the project, program, policy or budgetary decision that you assessed using the Racial Equity Toolkit.

We are assessing whether road-pricing policies (policies that charge people or companies for driving or using roadway space) can be used to reduce GHG emissions, improve mobility, advance equity, and provide progressive revenue sources for a more equitable transportation system.

2. List the racial equity outcome(s) that you set in Step 1 of the RET process. *(These Racial Equity Outcomes were designed by the Pricing Strategies Workgroup (made up of BIPOC members of the GNDOB, TEW, EJC & EDI.)*

1. **Be Designed Through a Safe, Inclusive, and Equitable Process.** Seattle’s discussion of equitable road-pricing strategies will be developed through an equitable process where priority populations (People with Low Incomes, Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Communities of Color, people with disabilities, people eligible for government assistance, Tribes, and those at risk of displacement, and youth and seniors from these communities) are given decision-making authority around policy recommendations. We recognize that Black people, Indigenous, Latinx, and communities of color have experienced the most harm from COVID-19, so co-designing this policy safely will be paramount. We also recognize that we must ensure on-going communication between the City and prioritized communities to address both positive and negative experiences after policy implementation.
2. **Benefit our priority populations**, defined as people with low incomes, Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Latinx, Communities of Color, people with disabilities, vulnerable youth and seniors, people who have been or are currently incarcerated, and those who have been or are at risk of displacement. The policy will prioritize distributing benefits to these priority populations who have currently and historically experienced disproportionate impacts of climate change, who have high transportation burdens, and who are at high risk of displacement or have been displaced from the City of Seattle. **Specifically, the policy must**
 - (1) Ensure revenue is prioritized and directly invested in reliable, safe, affordable public transportation and other transportation necessities for the priority populations identified;
 - (2) Ensure revenue is directed at programs that reduce congestion and travel times for people who have been displaced or gentrified and have been pushed out of the city core where they historically worked, worshiped, played, learned and lived;
 - (3) Reduce GHG emissions and exposure to air pollution effecting priority communities. Invest in improving health outcomes for people living near highways and industrial areas who have been historically and currently impacted by pollution and climate change. Invest in people, neighborhoods and lands we know will be impacted in the future.
 - (4) Assert that transportation infrastructure investments and policy innovation cannot proceed as usual if we are to fully realize racial justice and increased opportunities for wealth building, decolonization, and the thriving of communities of color. To

undo historical damage, a restorative approach to past and ongoing harm is necessary and we must make investments accordingly.

3. **Not Exacerbate Existing Burdens or Disparities.** Recommendations for new pricing strategies will only include recommendations that will not exacerbate transportation and economic burdens for priority populations, **specifically, the policy must not:**
 - (1) Increase the cost of transportation for those who have been displaced and/or already pay a high share of their income for transportation;
 - (2) Negatively impact people who must drive for work, ex: Ride-share drivers, domestic workers, shift workers, delivery and freight workers;
 - (3) Burden BIPOC-owned businesses downtown and surrounding areas;
 - (4) Restrict access to the City Center or other neighborhoods for access to social and city services.
 - (5) Result in enforcement actions (in-person by the police or via debt-collection or court actions) that burden or exacerbate the economic harm experienced by BIPOC communities
4. **Ensure Privacy Protections.** Recommendations for new stable, progressive pricing policies may require the adoption of new technologies. Any recommendations will ensure the privacy of our priority populations as well as undocumented people, immigrants, refugees, and people who have been formerly incarcerated that are currently being targeted, or have in the past been targeted, by the Federal, State, or local governments. Any technologies that may be considered cannot be used to harass or target BIPOC communities, must comply with the surveillance ordinance, and must be clear how and by whom data will be collected, managed, protected, and utilized, as structural racism continues to be perpetuated in the technology used by government.
5. **Intentionally Engage and Involve current and historic BIPOC residents of neighborhoods that may be impacted by any recommendation.** BIPOC communities have a long legacy of resilience and resistance, having survived generations of invasion, colonialism, internment, redlining, and racism at the hands of government. These policies will be designed around the unique needs of BIPOC Communities, many of which have been greatly impacted by government decisions like the development of the I-5 freeway, which has led to decades of poor air quality. BIPOC community members will be given decision-making power in the co-design process for new pricing recommendations. Ensuring that community members living both inside and outside the City continue to feel connected to culture, business, and community within the City is critical to this policy's success.

3. Which stakeholders (groups and/or key individuals) did you engage in this RET? In what ways did you engage them?

The pricing team convened a series of workshops with representatives from City advisory groups: the Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW), Equitable Development Initiative (EDI), Environmental Justice

Committee (EJC), and Green New Deal Oversight Board (GNDOB). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to conduct public workshops.

The 10 participants reviewed and provided feedback to the Pricing Team's original draft RET outcomes, as well as provided a fifth RET outcome to ensure that BIPOC communities continue to be engaged in policy development *and* implementation of any potential pricing policy.

OSE also engaged with other cities working on pricing across the country through the American Cities Climate Challenge, as well as engaged local nonprofits Transportation Choices Coalition and Front & Centered as thought partners.

4. Please describe up to five key benefits and/or burdens for people of color of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which the RET process helped you to identify or confirm.

The pricing team has incorporated the following potential benefits and burdens into our racial equity toolkit. We confirmed these benefits/burdens during our workshop sessions with Pricing Strategies Workgroup.

Key Benefits:

- (1) Progressive revenue is created and directly invested in reliable, safe, affordable public transportation and other transportation necessities for the priority populations identified.
- (2) Revenue is used to support programs that reduce congestion and travel times for people who have been displaced or gentrified and have been pushed out of the city core where they historically worked, worshiped, played, learned and lived;
- (3) Reduced GHG emissions and exposure to air pollution affecting priority communities.
- (4) Investments in improving health outcomes for people living near highways and industrial areas who have been historically and currently impacted by pollution and climate change and in people, neighborhoods and lands we know will be impacted in the future.

Potential Burdens:

- (1) Increase the cost of transportation for those who have been displaced and/or already pay a high share of their income for transportation;
- (2) Negatively impact people who must drive for work, ex: Ride-share drivers, domestic workers, shift workers, delivery and freight workers;
- (3) Burden BIPOC-owned businesses downtown and surrounding areas;
- (4) Restrict access to the City Center or other neighborhoods for access to social and city services.
- (5) Result in enforcement actions (in-person by the police or via debt-collection or court actions) that burden or exacerbate the economic harm experienced by BIPOC communities

5. Please describe up to five key actions – things that you will do differently or begin to do now – of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which will increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for people of color.

- (1) We are currently working to complete the pricing Racial Equity Toolkit report which will include recommendations to for how the City might proceed with exploring pricing policies to equitably reduce GHG emissions and expand transportation equity (by ensuring policies comport with the Racial Equity Outcomes designed by our workgroup.)
- (2) This RET report will also be shared with the Green New Deal Oversight Board. In the [GND Council Resolution](#) (Res 31895, 2019) the GND Oversight Board was charged with, “Implement(ing) a congestion pricing plan that is equitable and creates revenue to support transit expansion to benefit low-income, historically marginalized, and transit-disconnected communities first and foremost.

6. How will leadership ensure implementation of the actions described in question 4?

We plan to complete our toolkit and the report and share it with SDOT/OSE department heads, with the Green New Deal Oversight Board and with City leadership to determine the next step for this critical work.

7. How have/will you report back to your stakeholders? (This includes the people who were directly engaged in this RET process, those who will be affected by decisions made, and other departments or divisions impacted by the RET findings and the actions described in question 4.)

We plan to share out our RET Toolkit with City advisory groups: the Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW), Equitable Development Initiative (EDI), Environmental Justice Committee (EJC), and Green New Deal Oversight Board (GNDOB) before finalization and share with Transportation Choices and Front & Centered as well, to ensure they are comfortable with the way we have described their engagement and comments.

8. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation (i.e., working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity).

Many issues not directly related to road-pricing came up during our Pricing Strategies Workgroup discussions. Key issues include:

- (1) Regressive taxes than unfair burden BIPOC residents, like the sales tax.
- (2) That we must fully recognize the harm of colonization on Native communities, especially as it relates to our hydroelectric dams and the fossil-fuel-free electricity they provide. The electricity may be “green”, but it did not come without a price to native communities.
- (3) Broadly, that polices must specifically create and consider opportunities for wealth building, decolonization, and the thriving of communities of color. To undo historical damage, a restorative approach to past and ongoing harm is necessary and we must make investments accordingly.

OSE has shared this feedback with other relevant departments, notably Seattle City Light, as they are in ongoing engagement around the impact of dams and our power infrastructure on salmon and indigenous lands.

