

Fact Sheet: Smarter Tolling

It's Our Move, Massachusetts

Everyone hates traffic.

Massachusetts has some of the world's smartest, most productive, and innovative workers - but we make them sit for hours in soul-crushing traffic. That's no way to run an economy, and it's a drain on our quality of life.



Traffic is taking a toll on your wallet.

In 2017, traffic congestion cost the average driver in Greater Boston over \$2,000 in wasted fuel and lost time, according to INRIX. **That's more than \$330 per month for a family with two drivers.**



How Do We Fix This?

Smarter Tolling is used around the US to reduce traffic. This policy tool works by having different prices on toll roads during peak hours and off-peak hours. For example, drivers in Seattle and Atlanta pay less in tolls if they are driving outside of the typical rush hour.

Getting a small number of cars off the road at rush hour can have a big impact.

On some roads, a 5% reduction in traffic can reduce congestion by 20%.

Think about how much emptier the road feels on a Friday morning in the summer.

Where Could This Work in Massachusetts?

Example: The Tobin Bridge

- More than 10,000 cars try to cram across the Tobin Bridge between 7am and 9am on a typical weekday.
- Using Smarter Tolling on the Tobin Bridge would reduce congestion for those who are willing to pay the regular toll to drive during rush hour, while providing an incentive for those who can be flexible with their travel times.



Where has Smarter Tolling already been successful?

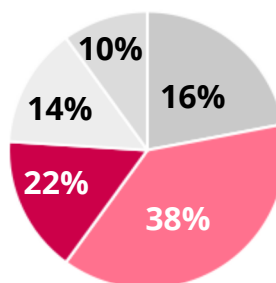


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A recent public opinion poll shows that **a majority of voters support raising tolls** if the revenue is used to solve congestion on the road they are driving. And with smarter tolling, many drivers would pay less outside of rush hour, which is a policy the public overwhelmingly supports. **60% of participants** support Smarter Tolling in the Boston area.

Would you support or oppose reducing tolls on the highways going in and out of Boston outside of rush hours, to encourage drivers to travel at less busy times of day?



- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Unsure/Prefer not to say
- Strongly oppose

Is Smarter Tolling Equitable?

A disproportionate number of people who are lower-income rely on public transportation. With Smarter Tolling, buses will benefit from reduced congestion during rush hours, allowing lower-income commuters to spend less time in traffic. For lower-income drivers in regions that raise tolls when demand is higher, programs exist to help offset the increased costs. For example, in LA, the Metro offers reduced toll accounts for qualifying drivers.

Smarter Tolling Pilot Project Proposed by T4MA

Since the Tobin Bridge has all-electronic tolling, MassDOT could charge less to encourage drivers to cross the bridge during less busy times, thereby reducing congestion at the busiest times and saving money for those who can be flexible. T4MA urges MassDOT to launch a **pilot program** that discounts tolls for those who drive off-peak hours on Boston's Tobin Bridge.



For more information....

- "We can either have free roads, or roads that work," writes Mike Widmer, former President of the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, in [Commonwealth](#).
- "Traffic congestion is taking a toll on Boston. Should Boston take a toll on congestion?" asks a recent article on [Boston.com](#).
- "In 2017, Greater Boston Drivers Spent An Average of 60 Hours in Traffic During Peak Times", according to a recent story at [WBUR.org](#).
- "Off-peak toll discount pilot program deserves a shot", states a new [Boston Globe editorial](#)
- www.T4MA.org/traffic