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Poll: Should Congestion Fees be Charged to Reduce Traffic?

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for planning has a congestion-pricing plan, the Chicago Tribune reported.

By [Brian Slupski](#) | [Email the author](#) | October 21, 2012

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The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has a plan that would allow [motorists to pay a fee or extra toll](#) and use a free-flowing express lane on some expressways, the Chicago Tribune reported.

The price for the [additional lanes would drop when less cars are on the road](#), the newspaper reported. The additional lanes would be added to the [I-90 Addams Tollway, I-290 Eisenhower Expressway and I-55 Stevenson Expressway](#), the Huffington Post reported.

However, [some new roadways would have congestion pricing across all lanes](#) – Elgin-O'Hare west bypass and the northern Highway 53 extension/Highway 120 bypass, the Huffington Post reported.

It's one thing to charge a fee to a free-flowing lane to allow someone to choose to avoid traffic, it's quite another to charge a fee to someone because they are using a route that is congested.

CMAP has a detailed, interactive [website that explains its congestion-pricing plan](#) in more detail. CMAP states congestion pricing across all lanes for the Elgin-O'Hare west bypass would drop travel times by 10 minutes and would drop 31 minutes off of the Route 53 extension/Highway 120 bypass.

Felix Salmon wrote in a piece for Reuters [why congestion pricing often is unpopular](#) with the public.

"If you want to implement a system which keeps traffic below maximum capacity, then you need to apply significant pressure on drivers to keep them away from the roads. And that means [not just implementing a congestion charge, but also regularly increasing the amount of the charge over time](#)," Salmon wrote.

For the express lane options, the CMAP plan would charge [5 cents to 31 cents per mile during rush hour to use an express lane](#), the Tribune reported. This amounts to \$2.76 for the Stevenson and \$3.41 for the Eisenhower, the newspaper reported.



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Should drivers pay fees related to traffic congestion?

- Yes. It will reduce traffic and let motorists make choices.
- No. We already pay tolls and taxes. If people don't want to sit in traffic, they don't have to drive.