A Health Impact Assessment of Congestion Pricing Policy in San Francisco, California

Rajiv Bhatia, MD, MPH; Megan Wier, MPH; Jennifer McLaughlin, MS; Cyndy Scully, MA; Tom Rivard, MS, REHS
San Francisco Department of Public Health - Program on Health, Equity and Sustainability

Policy: The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) is studying the feasibility of area congestion pricing in downtown San Francisco. Under the proposed scenarios, the City would charge drivers $3 to drive in the congested downtown area during weekday peak commute periods, potentially including freeway/bridge tolls. The SFCTA study includes a limited number of economic, environmental, equity, and transportation system performance impacts.

Screening: Are the Conditions Ripe for HIA?
- Study area includes large portion of San Francisco’s land area, residential, and employee populations
- Impact analysis is being conducted, but does not quantify health impacts
- Local and regional stakeholders concerned regarding policy impacts on air pollution, traffic hazards, and differential impacts based on geography, equity
- SFDPH has been developing and applying tools to assess the health impacts of traffic and transportation planning decisions
- Analyses could inform decisions being made regarding revenue investments in transportation services/infrastructure
- HIA framework and approach could be applied to future transportation policy and planning analyses at local, regional, and national levels

Scoping: Winter 2010
The HIA scope and the pathways (below) will be further developed in consult with a diverse group of local and regional community stakeholders representing health, environment, business, planning and other interests potentially impacted by congestion pricing.

Assessment: Spring - Summer 2010
1) Profile Baseline Conditions:
   - Socio-demographic conditions
   - Health-related behaviors – e.g., physical activity from active transportation, traffic-related injuries
   - Transportation environment and pedestrian quality, existing air pollution and noise levels
   - Resident and stakeholder perceptions of existing conditions and potential impacts
   Conduct population subgroup analyses (age, ethnicity, nationality, income, other factors identified by stakeholders) and assess potential place-based disparities in existing conditions or policy impacts.

2) Apply forecasting methods, including SFDPH HIA Tools, to study impacts of alternative area-level congestion pricing schemes on:
   - Motor vehicle collisions, including with pedestrians and bicyclists
   - Pedestrian and bicycle conditions
   - Active transportation, physical activity
   - Air pollutant exposures, greenhouse gas emissions, and associated premature mortality
   - Traffic-related noise and community noise-related annoyance and hypertension
   - Economic impacts of air quality and collisions

Reporting: Fall 2010
Local stakeholders and decision makers: Report findings via public presentations, written reports, and other outreach.
Regional, state, and national stakeholders: Report findings and implications for regional and national road pricing policy discussions via targeted online report dissemination, presentations at scientific conferences and peer-reviewed publications in interdisciplinary forums for transportation and public health researchers.

Monitoring & Evaluation: Ongoing

Fehr & Peers - Matthew Ridgway, AICP, PTP and Meghan Mitman, AICP
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, NIH - John Balbus, MD, MPH
San Francisco Injury Center – Rochelle Dicker, MD and Dahianna Lopez, RN, MSN, MPH
San Francisco Office of Economic Analysis - Kurt Fuchs
UC Berkeley, School of Public Health - Edmund Seto, PhD