

Dear Editor:

In "Letting drivers pay to avoid expressway delays," (Editorial, Oct. 29) The Chicago Tribune succinctly explained many of the potential regional benefits of designating highway lanes for motorists willing to pay higher tolls to avoid the slower moving travel in other lanes.

Another benefit of congestion pricing is its boost to the regional economy. If traffic, particularly freight traffic, can move in and out of the region quickly, we will become an even more attractive place for industry to expand and for people to live and work.

All motorists, including those who opt not to pay higher fees, could reduce their travel times. With fewer idling cars and trucks the region's air quality would be improved.

The Illinois Department of Transportation and the State Toll Highway Authority are open to the idea of congestion pricing. In fact, the Tollway already has moved in that direction with pricing incentives that encourage trucks to use the Tollway during non-peak nighttime hours. The Tollway has worked with IDOT, RTA and PACE to implement more comprehensive congestion pricing on the Jane Addams.

Now, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has advanced the conversation with a proposal to use congestion pricing to help pay the cost of needed new highway lanes in our region. This discussion needs to keep moving with the clear analysis and planning that CMAP and transportation agencies can offer and with a public education to answer the skeptics of change. Our region should move this discussion to the fast lane.

Sincerely,

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