



Helping tolling agencies overcome challenges

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In 2021, the Conduent Transportation team is laser-focused on how to continue helping tolling authorities and other transportation agencies navigate the challenges they are likely to face in the year ahead. We are hopeful that public health measures, especially new and emerging vaccinations will bring a much happier, healthier year for everyone.

In the meantime, however, the challenges our customers face today will drive everything, including:

- 1. Regaining, retaining resiliency** – Much like everyone, transportation agencies will be working to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This is why, for example, we will continue to optimize our work from home (WFH) capabilities, which have showcased our company's speed and agility in simultaneously supporting employees during a crisis, while also maintaining excellent customer support services. We plan to continue leveraging the tools and techniques that will allow as many of our associates as possible (your customer service representatives) to function safely, maintaining social distance, and avoiding outbreak risks inherent inside buildings, including call centers. Separately, by tracking tolling transactions on several of the largest toll road systems in the U.S., we have been able to illustrate how traffic volume is recovering since pandemic-related shutdowns last spring. Through the end of December, tolling traffic on these systems increased by approximately 2 percent compared to the same period in 2019. Across the U.S., the 2020 traffic recovery reflects the lifting of pandemic-related travel restrictions, along with efforts taken by state and local transportation agencies to encourage road use. Meanwhile, we will also continue to speed the implementation of contactless payment capabilities as we did in the Northeast U.S., and in municipal areas of Paris and Lyon in France, southeastern Australia, Flanders, Belgium, and northern Italy, among other places around the world. We know contactless payment capabilities help travelers stay safe when they ride trains, pay tolls, or use other forms of public transit.

2. **Streamlining, modernizing operations** -- Budgetary losses are driving regional agencies to reexamine tolling to help them maintain services through pandemic-associated shortfalls. Despite recent U.S. congressional actions to provide more government funds, ongoing budget constraints and rising infrastructure needs are putting pressure on municipal leaders around the world to do more. This is also why advances that leverage cloud-based services, for example, can help transportation authorities do more with less, by reducing/eliminating enormous capital investments. And for tolling authorities focused on integrating transportation modes to attract and retain riders, we know contactless payment capabilities, our recent patent awards, and the promise of mobility-as-a-service will help them achieve their most coveted goals. We recently helped New York, for example, to launch an app that modernizes tolling and enhances payment capabilities for E-ZPass customers. ‘Tolls NY’ is a free mobile application that was developed to help customers easily manage toll bill payments and E-ZPass accounts from their smartphones. NY has reported that since mid-2020, the Tolls NY app has been downloaded more than 300,000 times to help people manage their E-ZPass accounts, pay tolls by mail, add funds, or set up automatic payments.
3. **Improving social equity** – Our Conduent Transportation team is also determined to help agencies improve accessibility and social equity across every area of the transportation sector that we participate in. To that end, through our recent tolling contract wins, we are investing in opportunity zones to locate upcoming tolling operations centers. We are also expanding the number of college internships offered to students who live in economically disadvantaged areas. Separately, we also helped Arizona implement a program to enable unbanked residents to conveniently pay off parking tickets and other fines using cash. And our public safety team is working with state and local transportation agencies to better understand how advances in analytics and automation can be incorporated to help reduce bias in public safety operations.

We all know the road ahead is paved with uncertainty, and these efforts will require a great deal of patience, compassion, and hard work. However, we stand ready to help our transportation agency partners move their operations forward despite the challenges they face. And we plan to work harder than ever to better serve their needs in the months ahead.

To learn more about how we can help, visit us at www.ConduentTransportation.com, or email transportation@conduent.com.

About the Author

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