

To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group
Date: 12.13.2014
Re: Voters' views on transportation issues in New York

New Yorkers support a new proposal to balance the cost of tolls on bridges and tunnels in New York City.

New Yorkers support a new proposal to balance the cost of tolls on bridges and tunnels and invest in the region's transportation infrastructure, according to a new survey conducted by Global Strategy Group. Support increases to a two to one margin as voters learn more about the proposal. The specific elements of the proposal provide solutions to New Yorkers' most pressing transportation concerns, leading them to be more likely to support the proposal. Voters have confidence that the proposal will accomplish its goals and want to see their elected officials make transportation issues a priority. Furthermore, the new proposal enjoys significantly higher support than the 2008 congestion pricing proposal endorsed by Mayor Bloomberg.

New Yorkers support a new proposal to balance the cost of tolls on bridges and tunnels in New York City. Support increases as New Yorkers learn more about the proposal.

- Before hearing any specific details, a plurality of voters in the New York area (45%) are inclined to support a proposal to balance the cost of tolls on the city's bridges and tunnels while just 34 percent oppose. Support for the proposal is particularly strong among voters in Long Island (52% support) and the northern suburbs (48%). Both drivers (42% support) and public transit riders (45%) are more likely to support the proposal than oppose it.
- Following a more detailed description of the plan that includes how the proposal will balance tolls by instituting toll reductions on the outer bridges and additions on East River Bridges as well as an explanation of the exact changes to the cost of each toll, support for the proposal increases to a broad majority of voters (56%) and opposition remains about the same (36%).
- Support for the proposal increases further to 62 percent when voters learn about the benefits of the proposal with only 31 percent opposed – a two to one ratio in favor of the proposal.
- Even after voters are presented with criticisms of the proposal, support remains strong at 55 percent. Support is consistent across the region with a majority of voters in New York City (53%), Long Island (57%), and the northern suburbs (57%) favoring the proposal.

Support for a proposal to balance the costs of tolls is significantly higher than support for the 2008 congestion pricing plan promoted by Mayor Bloomberg.

- Less than a quarter of voters (22%) support the 2008 congestion pricing plan to charge vehicles driving into Manhattan below 60th Street; 70 percent oppose it.
- Voters in Long Island and the northern suburbs are particularly more likely to support the proposal to balance the cost of tolls over the 2008 congestion pricing proposal. Just 23 percent of Long Island voters and 20 percent of voters in the northern suburbs support the 2008 congestion pricing plan while support for balancing the cost of tolls is 52 percent in Long Island and 48 percent in the northern suburbs.

- Those who drive in the city are particularly negative toward the 2008 congestion pricing plan. Fewer than one in five (19%) support the 2008 congestion pricing plan compared to 42 percent who support the proposal to balance the cost of tolls before learning more about it (38% oppose).

The specific elements of the proposal provide solutions to New Yorkers' most pressing transportation concerns and therefore lead them to be more likely to support the proposal.

- When it comes to transportation issues, voters are most concerned about traffic and congestion (82% serious issue), the cost of tolls (81%), and the condition of roads and highways (77%).
- Almost three quarters of the electorate (73%) say that they would be more likely to support the proposal if it achieves its goal of improving the condition and speed of roads and bridges.
- Voters say that the elements of the proposal that address the cost of tolls such as setting lower toll rates during off-peak times than during peak times (69%) and reducing tolls on major and minor bridges in outer parts of the city (65%) make them more likely to support it.
- Sixty-three percent of voters say that they would be more likely to support the proposal because it will add more Express Bus routes and increase Express Bus service.

Voters have confidence that the proposal will accomplish its goals.

- Voters believe that the proposal will improve subway performance. More than three in five voters say it is likely that the proposal will lead to investments in subway signal systems to increase the frequency of trains (65%) and expand countdown clocks on subway platforms to all lines (62%).
- More than two-thirds of the electorate (68%) say that the proposal will add more Express Bus routes and increase Express Bus service.
- Sixty-three percent of voters say that the condition and speed of roads and bridges is likely to improve as a result of the proposal.
- Voters have faith that the proposal will address one of their biggest concerns about transportation in the area, the cost of tolls. A majority of voters believe the proposal will succeed in reducing tolls on major and minor bridges in outer parts of the city (51%). Even more believe the proposal will set lower toll rates during off-peak times than peak times (64%).

New Yorkers want to see their elected officials make transportation issues a priority.

- More than four in five voters (87%) believe the condition of roads and highways should be a priority for their elected officials.
- Seventy eight percent of voters feel that their elected officials should make traffic and congestion a priority.
- Voters want their elected officials to address the cost of transportation. A majority say the cost of tolls (72%) and the cost of buses, trains, and subways (68%) should be priority issues for their elected officials.

About The Survey

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 1,003 registered voters in the 12 county MTA service area (Manhattan, Bronx, Kings, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Nassau, Suffolk, Orange, Putnam, Dutchess, and Westchester). The survey was conducted from November 5-11, 2014 using live interviewers. The margin of error at the 95% confidence interval is +/- 3.1 percent. The margin of error on subsamples is greater.