



February 19, 2024

To: City of West Linn, City of Oregon City, City of Tualatin, City of Wilsonville, and United Food & Commercial Workers
From: DHM Research
Re: Regionally tolling survey

DHM Research conducted a survey of voters in the Portland metro region to assess their attitudes about ODOT's tolling proposals, including the Regional Mobility Pricing Project and the I-205 Toll Project. This memo highlights key findings from the survey.

Key Findings

Voters are concerned about major roads and highways in the region.

- 74% of voters say that they are concerned about the quality of major roads in the region, and 81% are concerned about traffic congestion.
- Concern about the quality of roads is somewhat higher in Multnomah (79%) and Clackamas counties (77%).
- Voters in Washington and Clackamas counties are the most concerned about traffic congestion (85% and 86% respectively).

Voters are opposed to the concept of tolling in the Portland Metro region.

- Before being provided information about ODOT's proposal, the survey asked a general question to gauge support for tolling in the region. Overall, 76% oppose tolling.
- Opposition to tolling is highest in Clackamas County (91%).

Voters also oppose ODOT's Regional Mobility Pricing Project and the I-205 Toll Project.

- After being provided a description of the tolling projects, 71% oppose RMPP, and 64% oppose the I-205 Toll Project.
- Opposition to the RMPP is 61% in Multnomah County, 76% in Washington County, and 83% in Clackamas County.
- Opposition to the I-205 Toll Project is 53% in Multnomah County, 64% in Washington County, and 84% in Clackamas County.

Voters say they are opposed to tolling because of costs and affordability.

- When asked open-ended questions about their opposition to tolls, voters most often cited affordability, including the perception of already paying high taxes (41%) and the belief that tolls would disproportionately burden low-income drivers (19%).

Most voters in the region report being aware of ODOT's tolling proposals, but few have engaged in the decision-making process.

- 61% of voters have heard about ODOT's tolling proposals.
- 6% of voters have attended any public meetings about the proposals, and 13% have provided ODOT with any feedback about them.

To pay for transportation improvements in the region, voters support increasing registration fees on electric vehicles but oppose other methods.

- 61% support increasing registration fees for electric vehicles.
- 36% support increasing registration fees for all vehicles.
- 33% support increasing gas taxes.
- 24% support a pay-per-mile system that would charge drivers a few cents per mile driven.

Methodology

The survey was conducted from February 7-13, 2024, and consisted of 600 voters in Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties. It took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Respondents were contacted from a list of registered voters.¹ Telephone respondents were contacted by a live interviewer and text-to-online respondents received a text invitation directing them to an online survey. In gathering responses, a variety of quality control measures were employed, including questionnaire pre-testing and validation. Quotas were set by age, gender, race, education, income, county, and political party affiliation to ensure a representative sample.

Any sampling of opinions or attitudes is subject to a margin of error. The margin of error is a standard statistical calculation that represents differences between the sample and total population at a confidence interval, or probability, calculated to be 95%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the sample taken for this study would fall within the stated margin of error if compared with the results achieved from surveying the entire population. The margin of error for this survey is $\pm 4.0\%$.

About DHM Research

DHM Research has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the United States for over 40 years. The firm is nonpartisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policymaking.

¹ As of November 2022, 94% of eligible Oregonians were registered to vote.

February 7- February 13, 2024
N=600 (Clackamas, Multnomah & Washington counties)
Margin of error ±4.0%
10 minutes

DHM Research
Project #01259

Objective:

- Assess general awareness of tolling and its purpose
- Assess general awareness of current plans (RMPP vs I-205)
- Gauge interest in alternative measures to fund transportation
- Gauge public opinion about congestion in the Portland Metro region and if people are concerned enough to pay more to reduce it

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling with [name of field house] to get opinions on important issues in your community. May I please speak to _____ **[Must speak to name on list. If unavailable, schedule call back]**. If necessary:

- We are not trying to sell you anything.
- The survey should only take a few minutes and I think you will find the questions interesting.
- Your answers are strictly confidential.

1. Do you own or lease a vehicle?

Response category	n=600
Yes	86%
No	13%
Don't know	1%

2. In what county do you live in?

Response category	n=600
Multnomah County	45%
Washington County	32%
Clackamas County	23%
Another county	TERM

GENERAL TRANSPORTATION ATTITUDES

This survey is about transportation in the Portland metro region.

To start, here are a couple transportation issues in the Portland metro region. For each indicate if you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned.

Response category	NET Very/Somewhat	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	NET Not too/Not at all	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	Don't know
3. The quality of major roads and highways in the Portland metro region							
Total, n=600	74%	38%	36%	26%	20%	5%	<1%
Multnomah, n=270	79%	40%	39%	21%	17%	4%	--
Washington, n=192	66%	32%	35%	34%	26%	8%	--
Clackamas, n=138	77%	44%	33%	22%	17%	5%	<1%
4. Traffic congestion on major roads and highways in the Portland metro region							
Total, n=600	81%	40%	41%	19%	14%	4%	<1%
Multnomah, n=270	75%	37%	38%	25%	20%	4%	--
Washington, n=192	85%	43%	42%	15%	11%	4%	--
Clackamas, n=138	86%	44%	42%	12%	8%	5%	1%

TOLLING

The next questions are about tolling.

Tolls are used to reduce traffic congestion and to raise money to help maintain and improve the roads. Toll prices typically vary based on the level of traffic congestion and are higher during the busiest times. The Portland metro region currently does not have any tolls.

5. In general, would you support or oppose using tolls in the Portland metro area?

Response category	All n=600	Multnomah n=270	Washington n=192	Clackamas n=138
NET Support	19%	24%	22%	8%
Strongly support	8%	10%	10%	2%
Somewhat support	11%	14%	11%	6%
NET Oppose	76%	69%	76%	91%
Somewhat oppose	14%	17%	11%	11%
Strongly oppose	63%	52%	65%	81%
Don't know	5%	8%	3%	1%

6. **[If support]** Why do you support using tolls in the Portland metro area? **[Open]**

Response category	n=117
Raise revenue/Help supplement gas tax	31%
Roads need maintenance/expansion/better infrastructure	29%
Reduce demand/congestion/traffic	28%
People who use roads should pay	15%
Encourage and fund travel alternatives/mass transit	13%
Fund other resources	8%
Reduce air pollution/Better for environment	5%
Works in other states/cities	4%
Out of state contributions	3%
Other	3%
Don't know/Unsure/Refused	5%

7. **[If oppose]** Why do you oppose using tolls in the Portland metro area? **[Open]**

Response category	n=456
Taxes too high/No more taxes/Taxes pay for it already	41%
Unfair to low-income drivers/Costly/Expensive	19%
Mismanagement of funds/No oversight of spending	16%
Oppose toll roads/Do more harm than good	15%
Cost of living/Gas/Inflation	14%
Causes more traffic/Congestion on side streets	10%
Harder for work commutes/commuting	8%
Roads never get fixed/Expand freeways	8%
Not needed/Unnecessary/Waste	7%
Won't work/Bad idea	6%
Find another source	4%
Improve public transportation	2%
Targets specific area/drivers	2%
Concern about homelessness	1%
Bad for economy/Driving business away	1%
Other	2%
None/Nothing/Don't know/Unsure/Refused	1%

TOLLING PROPOSALS

Currently, the Oregon Department of Transportation’s (ODOT) primary source of revenue is the gas tax. Due to increased fuel efficiency and the increasing number of electric vehicles, ODOT is exploring tolling to make up for a projected impacts on revenue from gas taxes. ODOT has proposed two plans to implement tolls on major roads in the region.

The next set of questions is about these proposals.

8. Have you heard or read anything about ODOT’s tolling proposals in the Portland metro region? **[if no, skip to Q12]**

Response category	n=600
Yes	61%
No	39%

ODOT has sought public feedback about these tolling plans. Please indicate if you have done any of the following:

Response category	Yes Q8 n=368	All n=600
11. Visited ODOT’s webpage about these tolling plans	37%	23%
9. Provided any feedback to ODOT	21%	13%
10. Attended any public meetings	10%	6%

Regional Mobility Pricing Project

The Regional Mobility Pricing Project would toll all lanes of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region. Tolls would be higher during the busiest times. ODOT estimates that drivers would save 5-10 minutes in travel time on I-5 and 3-5 minutes on I-205, when driving these roads across the entire length of the region.

The revenue from the tolls would fund the maintenance and improvements of the existing roads. They would not fund adding lanes or building new roads. ODOT has not set the rate for the tolls yet. There are plans to implement discounts on tolls for low-income drivers.

12. Knowing this, do you support or oppose the Regional Mobility Pricing Project?

Response category	All n=600	Multnomah n=270	Washington n=192	Clackamas n=138
NET Support	27%	36%	23%	15%
Strongly support	8%	11%	6%	4%
Somewhat support	19%	25%	17%	12%
NET Oppose	71%	61%	76%	83%
Somewhat oppose	13%	16%	15%	5%
Strongly oppose	58%	46%	61%	78%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	1%

I-205 and Abernethy Bridge Toll Project

The I-205 and Abernethy (æ-bur-nath-ee) Bridge Toll Project would toll the Abernethy Bridge, which is the I-205 bridge across the Willamette (will-AM-it) River between Oregon City and West Linn. Tolls would be higher during busiest travel times.

The revenue from the tolls will be used to pay some of the construction costs to make the Abernethy Bridge earthquake-ready and fund other local road and transit improvements.

13. Knowing this, do you support or oppose the I-205 and Abernethy Bridge Toll Project?

Response category	All n=600	Multnomah n=270	Washington n=192	Clackamas n=138
NET Support	32%	42%	31%	14%
Strongly support	11%	14%	11%	5%
Somewhat support	22%	29%	21%	9%
NET Oppose	64%	53%	64%	84%
Somewhat oppose	12%	12%	16%	6%
Strongly oppose	51%	40%	47%	78%
Don't know	4%	5%	5%	2%

Additionally, there has been discussion to add tolls to other major highways in the Portland metro region, including Highway 26 and Highway 217.

14. Would you support or oppose adding any additional tolls like these?

Response category	All n=600	Multnomah n=270	Washington n=192	Clackamas n=138
NET Support	18%	22%	18%	10%
Strongly support	7%	10%	7%	2%
Somewhat support	10%	12%	11%	7%
NET Oppose	77%	70%	80%	87%
Somewhat oppose	13%	15%	12%	9%
Strongly oppose	64%	55%	68%	77%
Don't know	5%	8%	2%	4%

SUPPORT AND OPPOSE TOLLING STATEMENTS

The next set of questions are about reasons to support and oppose these tolling proposals.

Here are some reasons that some people support the tolling policies. For each indicate if you think they are very good, good, poor, or very poor reasons to support these toll projects.

Response category	NET Good	Very good	Good	NET Poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know
15. Tolls increase revenue to pay for highway maintenance and improvements that cannot be covered by the current funding from gas taxes. These tolls ensure that there is adequate funding to maintain these major roads.							
n=600	37%	12%	24%	61%	23%	39%	2%
18. Tolls are a fair way to make sure that those who use the roads the most are doing the most to help pay for their upkeep and improvement.							
n=600	37%	11%	26%	61%	22%	39%	2%
17. Tolling encourages some drivers to choose alternative modes of transportation other than driving, such as taking public transportation or biking. This could reduce congestion on highways.							
n=600	33%	13%	20%	65%	24%	41%	2%
16. Tolls discourage people from driving during the busiest times, helping to reduce travel time.							
n=600	28%	9%	19%	70%	26%	44%	2%

Here are some reasons some people oppose the tolling policies. For each indicate if you think they are very good, somewhat good, somewhat poor, or very poor reasons to oppose these toll projects.

Response category	NET Good	Very good	Good	NET Poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know
19. These tolls would place an unfair burden on people who don't have the option to shift work hours or travel times to avoid the most expensive tolls.							
n=600	83%	61%	22%	14%	7%	7%	3%
20. Highway tolls increase neighborhood traffic because drivers take side streets to avoid paying the tolls. This makes neighborhoods less safe for pedestrians and causes local traffic congestion.							
n=600	80%	58%	22%	17%	8%	8%	3%
22. I-5 and I-205 are major roads that affect trade and commerce for the entire state. The costs for maintaining them should be shared broadly at the state level rather than burdening local residents.							
n=600	79%	50%	29%	17%	9%	9%	3%
21. ODOT's own analysis shows that these tolls will only save drivers three to ten minutes for trips across the entire region. That is not enough to justify adding a new tax on drivers.							
n=600	74%	52%	22%	22%	13%	9%	4%
23. Only 50% to 70% of the revenue generated from the tolls will go towards highway maintenance and improvements. The rest will go to towards setting up and operating the tolling system. It is a waste of taxpayer money.							
n=600	73%	51%	22%	23%	12%	10%	4%

Now that you've considered different perspectives, consider these tolling plans again.

24. Do you support or oppose the Regional Mobility Pricing Project that would toll all lanes of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan region?

Response category	n=600
NET Support	21%
Strongly support	8%
Somewhat support	14%
NET Oppose	76%
Somewhat oppose	14%
Strongly oppose	63%
Don't know	2%

25. Do you support or oppose the I-205 and Abernethy Bridge Toll Project that would toll the Abernethy Bridge, which is the I-205 bridge across the Willamette River between Oregon City and West Linn?

Response category	n=600
NET Support	26%
Strongly support	10%
Somewhat support	16%
NET Oppose	71%
Somewhat oppose	13%
Strongly oppose	58%
Don't know	3%

26. Considering your routine traveling needs, would public transit provide a viable alternative to traveling on the roads that ODOT is proposing to toll?

Response category	n=600
NET Yes	16%
Yes, definitely	8%
Yes, probably	7%
NET No	82%
No, probably not	19%
No, definitely not	63%
Don't know	3%

ALTERNATIVES

Next is a question about alternatives to tolling.

Assuming that additional revenue is needed for major transportation improvements in the Portland metro region, some alternatives to tolling have been discussed. Indicate whether you support or oppose the following alternatives to tolling?

Response category	NET Support	Strongly support	Somewhat support	NET Oppose	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know
29. Increase registration fees for electric vehicles							
n=600	61%	38%	23%	37%	13%	24%	2%
28. Increase registration fees for all vehicles							
n=600	36%	11%	26%	62%	21%	41%	1%
27. Increase gas taxes							
n=600	33%	12%	21%	66%	16%	50%	1%
30. Pay-per-mile system that would charge drivers a few cents per mile driven							
n=600	24%	6%	18%	71%	13%	58%	4%

DEMOGRAPHICS

These last few questions help us know if we are hearing from a representative group of people. Your responses are confidential and anonymous.

31. How often do you drive on I-5 and I-205 within the Portland metro region?

Response category	n=600
Daily	22%
A few times a week	36%
A few times a month	31%
Less than once a month	9%
Don't know	1%

32. **[If drive on I-5 and I-205]** When you drive on I-5 and I-205, is it mostly to commute to and from work, mostly for other reasons, or about the same?

Response category	n=591
Mostly for other reasons	57%
Mostly to and from work	28%
About the same	16%

33. Age

Response category	n=600
18-29	19%
30-44	30%
45-64	31%
65+	20%

34. How do you describe your gender?

Response category	n=600
Man	49%
Woman	49%
Non-binary or gender non-conforming	2%
Another way [Open]	n=1
I prefer not to say	n=1

35. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? **[Allow for multiple responses]**

Response category	n=600
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%
Black/African/African American	6%
Hispanic/Latino/a/x	10%
Native American/American Indian	3%
White/Caucasian	59%
Other	11%
Don't know	2%
I prefer not to say	7%

36. Which category best describes your gross household income, before taxes? Remember to include everyone living in your household. Your best estimate will do.

Response category	n=600
Less than \$25,000	7%
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	19%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	13%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	14%
\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	18%
\$150,000 or more	25%
I prefer not to say	4%

37. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Response category	n=600
Less than high school	2%
High school diploma/GED	25%
Some college/2-year degree	29%
College degree/4-year degree	20%
Graduate/professional school	21%
I prefer not to say	2%

38. What is your current employment status?

Response category	n=600
Employed: full-time	59%
Employed: part-time	10%
Unemployed: looking for work	4%
Unemployed: not looking for work	3%
Retired	20%
I prefer not to say	4%

39. Party

Response category	n=600
Democrat	41%
Republican	16%
NAV/other	43%