

Executive Summary

Background and Purpose

Government Relations would like to gauge public opinion on transportation congestion. A previous study, by AAA Market Research (December 2005), showed a low level of public interest in the issue of traffic congestion. Since that study was conducted on a National basis, it was hypothesized that public opinion on traffic congestion varies based on the degree to which the public experiences it (i.e. people in rural areas are less concerned about traffic congestion than people in urban areas). The Texas Transportation Institute’s *2005 Urban Mobility Report* shows that traffic congestion “continues to worsen”, especially for “very large area” cities (US MSAs with a population greater than 3 million people, see attached definition). The survey reported here contains a sufficient sample to explore public opinion on traffic congestion in “very large area” cities, as well as on a National basis.

The results will be used in a speech by Bob Darbelnet on December 5, 2006.

Objectives

The survey addresses the following:

- Do you think transportation is a problem in your area?
- How should improvements be paid for?

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The public considers transportation to be of lower importance when compared to other public policy issues on the questionnaire (Healthcare, National Security, Education, Social Security, and Energy Independence). Nevertheless, there is consensus (64%) that traffic congestion has gotten worse over the past 3 years. Moreover, there is strong sentiment (71%) that more money is needed to maintain and improve our transportation system because we’re not keeping pace with the demands on the system.
- Among options to help pay for the transportation system, respondents preferred adding tolls (52%) to increasing taxes such as motor fuels or sales, income, and property taxes or imposing taxes on vehicle miles driven (40%).
- Among toll options proposed as ways to increase funding, adding tolls on new roads and highway lanes is preferred (39%) to adding them on both new and existing roads and highway lanes (33%).