

Americans Say Road Usage Fees Best Way to Pay for Transportation Infrastructure

Results from latest HNTB America THINKS survey show vehicle miles traveled and mileage-based user fees increasingly favored

NEW YORK ([PRWEB](#)) April 28, 2016 -- Nearly 160 million Americans (65 percent) would support the use of road-usage fee options such as vehicle miles traveled or mileage-based user fees to help fund transportation costs, according to a new America THINKS national public opinion survey by HNTB Corporation. These new findings demonstrate a significant increase in favorability from a similar survey conducted in 2014 when 50 percent of respondents said they would support this approach to infrastructure funding.

The survey, Transportation Mobility 2016, also found that close to 170 million Americans (69 percent) agree priced managed lanes should be considered when making improvements to U.S. highways.

"The growing recognition that new ways are needed to pay the costs of maintaining and building our transportation infrastructure, shows Americans understand the fundamental shifts in funding infrastructure are happening. More and more people realize that road-usage fees options, such as vehicle miles traveled or price managed lanes, are needed to fill the gaps resulting from declining ability of federal gas taxes to provide needed funds," said Matthew Click, AICP, HNTB national director of priced managed lanes and vice president. "Yet, the use of traditional approaches, such as federal gas taxes, sales and property taxes, continue to be favored by certain segments of the population."

The survey's findings show that more than half (55 percent) of Americans believe funding to maintain and build the nation's infrastructure of local roads bridges and tunnels over the next ten years should come from increased taxes, including gas taxes (24 percent), sales taxes (20 percent) and property taxes (11 percent) versus user fees (45 percent).

Similarly, for the funding of maintenance, additional lanes and safety improvements for the nation's interstate highways, 56 percent of Americans would prefer increased taxes, such as federal gas (28%), sales (17%), or property (10%) taxes, over user fees.

Generational differences

The America THINKS survey identifies the emergence of significant generational differences in how infrastructure should be funded over the next ten years. For local infrastructure needs, 68 percent of millennials* prefer increased taxes to user fees in lieu of gas taxes, compared to fewer generation X-ers (58 percent), baby boomers (43 percent) or seniors (51 percent).

The survey also found that millennials and generation X-ers are over three times as likely as their baby boomer and senior counterparts (17 percent versus 5 percent) to prefer to pay for local infrastructure needs through higher property taxes. And, more millennials (25 percent) and generation X-ers (21 percent) than baby boomers (14 percent) would opt to pay with higher sales taxes.

Another generational difference emerges on the desirability of user fees, such as vehicle miles traveled or mileage-based user fees. Almost four in five Americans (77 percent) ages 18-24 are likely to support these types of fees versus 63 percent of older Americans. Also, Americans ages 18-24 are more likely than their older

counterparts (79 percent versus 67 percent) to agree that priced managed lanes should be considered when making improvements to the nation's highways.

“The differences among younger Americans from their older counterparts in how to fund infrastructure is likely a reflection of their increased reliance on public transit over private automobiles, and a lower rate of home ownership than older Americans,” said Click.

Being connected matters

The America THINKS survey found that 67 percent of Americans who plan to buy or lease a vehicle see that availability and affordability of connected vehicle technologies would be important in their next vehicle, with 26 percent who feel this is very important. And, close to three-quarters (73 percent) of 18-49 year olds agree that this technology is important versus 58 percent of older Americans.

Public transit can help cure congestion

According to the survey, 30 percent of Americans think the most valuable feature of public transportation is that it reduces traffic congestion due to less vehicles being on the road. Again, generational differences emerge, with more baby boomers and seniors than millennials and generation X-ers (38 percent versus 25 percent) agreeing that reduced congestion is the best benefit of public transportation.

Also, 31 percent of Americans believe the best way to reduce congestion on roadways is by providing more public transportation choices, with more Americans ages 50-68 than those 18-49 (36 percent versus 28 percent) in agreement.

About the survey

HNTB's America THINKS transportation mobility 2016 survey was conducted by Kelton Global among 1,002 nationally representative Americans ages 18 and over between March 14 and March 22, 2016, using an e-mail invitation and online survey. Quotes were set to ensure reliable representation of the entire U.S. population ages 18 and over. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent.

About HNTB

HNTB Corporation is an employee-owned infrastructure solutions firm serving public and private owners and contractors. With more than a century of service, HNTB understands the life cycle of infrastructure and addresses clients' most complex technical, financial and operational challenges. Professionals nationwide deliver a full range of infrastructure-related services, including award-winning planning, design, program management and construction management. For more information, visit www.hntb.com.

*Millennials: Ages 18-34

Gen X: Ages 35-49

Baby Boomers: Ages 50-68

Seniors: Ages 69+



Contact Information

Andrew Hoskins

HNTB Corporation

<http://news.hntb.com>

+1 8165272122

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