

Texas Department of Transportation Research Project No. 0-4817: Public Perceptions of Toll Roads

Phone Survey Instrument

Developed by
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Final Phone Survey

(OSR: please note on survey sheets phone number called, city of phone number, number of times called, how many times got an answering machine vs. person vs. no answer vs. other, who answered phone (gender, approximate age [child under 13, teenager, 20-40, 40-70, 70+], length of call, reason for refusal, and any other notes of interest). We need this info regardless of whether a response was obtained.)

Hello, my name is ----- . I'm calling from the Office of Survey Research at The University of Texas at Austin. We are conducting a survey on the subject of toll roads in Texas.

Is this a private residence?

- a) Yes
- b) no → Thank you very much, but we are looking for private residences only.

In order to randomly select a respondent from your household, may I speak to the person 18 years or older who most recently had a birthday?

- a) yes
- b) no or not available → May I set up another time to contact this person?

(OSR: please note if the person who answered the phone was the person with the most recent birthday)

[If new person comes to phone, otherwise go to next paragraph] Hello, my name is ----- . I am calling from the Office of Survey Research at The University of Texas at Austin.

I am calling to request your participation in a research study on the subject of toll roads in Texas. The study is being conducted for Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) by the Center for Transportation Research here at UT Austin and will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. Your opinions are extremely important to the success of this study as well as to future transportation

planning and policy making in Texas. Your telephone number has been selected at random.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. All information obtained is kept completely confidential. You can choose to not answer any question or stop the interview at any time. Responses from this survey will be used to inform and shape statewide transportation policy.

Are you willing to participate in this important survey?

a) yes

b) no → Would you be willing to participate in a mail or on-line survey on this subject to receive a free map of Texas? [if yes, see text after question 41]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey.

The state of Texas is dealing with problems of financial shortages while trying to accommodate rising demand on our highway system due to a growing population, an increase in driving, and evolving travel patterns by Texas residents.

First we have a few questions about your driving patterns and awareness of toll roads.

1. How many days per week do you travel by car (or private vehicle)? _____

2. How often do you travel on a toll road? _____ (get actual answer, if possible)

a) more than 4 days a week

b) at least once a week

c) at least once a month

d) at least once a year

e) less than once a year

f) never have used a toll road

3. Are you aware of any toll road projects in your area?

a) yes [Ask 4]

b) no [Skip to 5]

4. Which ones? _____

Traditionally, Texas transportation funding has come almost entirely from gasoline taxes, but these taxes are no longer sufficient to pay for all transportation system maintenance and improvements. Therefore, additional funding options are being considered by the Texas Department of Transportation.

The following are some statements regarding current transportation issues in Texas. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree as I read each statement:

5. Texas should expand and improve current highways before building new ones.
- a) strongly agree
 - b) agree
 - c) neutral
 - d) disagree
 - e) strongly disagree
6. Texas does not need to increase its transportation spending because it already spends enough on the transportation system.
- a) strongly agree
 - b) agree
 - c) neutral
 - d) disagree
 - e) strongly disagree

The following two questions relate to payment of road use.

[Option 1 information, remove for version 2] There are costs associated with all roads. For fiscal year 2003, TxDOT had a 5.2 billion dollar budget, of which 42% was spent on maintenance and 33% was spent on construction.

[Option 2 information, remove for version 1] Driving is not free. American car owners pay an average of over \$7,754 per year to own and operate a car. Taxes and fees, which are paid as a portion of this cost, are used by the government to fund transportation maintenance and improvements.

For the next two statements, again please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree:

7. Drivers should not have to pay tolls for construction and use of **new** roadways. Gas and other taxes are the best way to pay for road use.
- a) strongly agree
 - b) agree
 - c) neutral
 - d) disagree
 - e) strongly disagree
8. Drivers should not have to pay tolls to use **existing** roadways. Gas and other taxes are the best way to pay for road use.
- a) strongly agree
 - b) agree
 - c) neutral
 - d) disagree
 - e) strongly disagree

The following questions ask for your preference between two transportation funding options.

9. *[Option 1 introduction, remove for version 2]* Texans currently pay 38.4 cents on every gallon in combined 20 cent state and 18.4 cent federal gas taxes. However, 26 other states have higher gas taxes with the highest rate being 49.4 cents per gallon. If the choice to increase transportation funding were between raising the state gasoline taxes and converting some existing roads into toll roads, which is a better policy for the state of Texas?

- a) raising the state gasoline tax
- b) converting some existing roads into toll roads
- c) no preference

10. If the choice to increase transportation funding were between raising gasoline taxes and charging rush-hour tolls on all existing non-tolled roads, which is a better policy for the State of Texas?

- a) raising the gasoline tax
- b) charging rush-hour tolls
- c) no preference

11. Partnerships between the public and private companies are one option for toll road project management. *[Option 1 sentence, remove for version 2]* Roadway projects managed by these partnerships generally result in quicker completion. *[Option 2 sentence, remove for version 1]* Public/private partnerships allow private companies involvement in projects that would have traditionally been handled entirely by the public sector. If the choice for toll road project management were between a public/private partnership, or the public alone, which would you prefer?

- a) public/private partnership
- b) the public alone
- c) no preference

The following questions are related to setting toll prices.

12. What is the most important reason that commercial trucks should pay higher tolls than passenger vehicles?

- a) they cause more pavement damage than passenger cars
- b) they contribute more to congestion than passenger cars
- c) they have a greater impact on roadway safety than passenger cars
- d) they pollute more than passenger cars
- e) other: _____ (please specify)
- f) commercial trucks should not pay higher tolls than passenger vehicles

13. In the United States, more than 75% of workers drive alone to their jobs. Many of these workers are commuting during rush hours, when traffic congestion is at its worst. *[Option 1 sentence, remove for version 2]* Reducing drive alone travel can have an important part in relieving traffic congestion. Should single occupancy vehicles be required to pay higher tolls than vehicles carrying more than one (human) occupant?

- a) yes
- b) no

14. Two methods commonly used to determine toll rates are by vehicle miles traveled and by the entry/exit combinations used. Charging by vehicle miles traveled is a distance-based method, while tolling based on entry/exit combinations is a location-based method. If the choice for toll rate determination was between vehicle miles traveled and entry/exit combinations used, which would you prefer?

- a) vehicle miles traveled
- b) entry/exit combinations used
- c) no preference

Now I'm going to ask you a few more background questions. Please keep in mind that your responses will be kept confidential.

15. How long have you lived in the **area** where you presently live? _____ (get actual answer, if possible)

- a) less than three years
- b) three to ten years
- c) more than ten years
- d) born here

16. How long have you lived in the state of Texas? _____ (get actual answer, if possible)

- a) less than three years
- b) three to ten years
- c) more than ten years
- d) born here

17. What is your employment status?

- a) employed full-time
- b) employed part-time
- c) full-time student
- d) homemaker
- e) unemployed
- f) retired

The following items are statements about toll roads. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:

18. After paying for a new roadway's construction, tolls should be reduced to only pay maintenance (rather than accelerating expansion or construction of other roads).

- a) strongly agree
- b) agree
- c) neutral
- d) disagree
- e) strongly disagree

19. Toll revenues collected in one region should only be used to pay for maintenance and improvements to roads within the same region.

- a) strongly agree
- b) agree
- c) neutral
- d) disagree
- e) strongly disagree

20. Converting existing major roadways to toll roads will cause more congestion on local streets as drivers seek to avoid paying tolls.

- a) strongly agree
- b) agree
- c) neutral
- d) disagree
- e) strongly disagree

[option 1 order] switch question order for 21 and 22 for version 2

21. Tolling would allow for the best use of our roads, since without tolling, persons who are relatively fixed in their driving time are forced to share limited road space during rush hours with those who can be more flexible with the times they travel.

- a) strongly agree
- b) agree
- c) neutral
- d) disagree
- e) strongly disagree

22. Since tolls are not based on income levels, toll roads are less equitable than non-tolled roads.

- a) strongly agree
- b) agree
- c) neutral
- d) disagree
- e) strongly disagree

(If answer to 17 was a, b, or c ask 23-28, otherwise skip to 29)

Now I'm going to ask you four questions related to your typical travel patterns.

23. What mode of travel do you use most often to get to [work/school]?

- a) drive alone
- b) carpool
- c) public transit
- d) bike or walk
- e) work at home [Skip to 29]
- f) other: _____(please specify)

24. When you don't travel by ...[answer to 23], what form of transportation do you use to get to [work/school]?

[hide answer to 23]

- a) drive alone
- b) carpool
- c) public transit
- d) bike or walk
- e) other: _____(please specify)

25. How many days a month do you travel by [answer to 24]? _____(please specify)

26. What is the primary reason [answer to 24] is your second choice and not your first? _____

27. What is the primary type of road you use to go to and from [work/school]?

- a) local streets
- b) high-speed non-tolled highways
- c) toll roads
- d) rural roads

28. How far do you live from work or school? _____(get actual number if possible)

- a) less than 5 miles
- b) 5 to 10 miles
- c) 11 to 25 miles
- d) 25 to 50 miles
- e) more than 50 miles

Assume each of the following toll road features was applied to the highway you most often use. Please answer "yes" if you think it would be a good feature or "no" if you do not think it would be a good feature.

29. During rush-hours, toll rates would be increased from the normal 10 cents per mile rate to a rate of 15 cents per mile for each passenger vehicle.

- a) yes, this is a good feature
- b) no, this is not a good feature

30. People who drive alone would be allowed to travel in the carpool lanes for a toll.

- a) yes, this is a good feature
- b) no, this is not a good feature

The following two questions relate to toll tags. A toll tag is a small device attached to a car's windshield used for electronic recognition.

[Option 1 information, remove for version 2] As cars drive past toll collection areas, sensors would determine the toll rate for each car and charges would be automatically deducted from a driver's pre-paid account. Monthly statements would be sent to a driver showing the date, time, location, and amount of each toll.

[Option 2 information, remove for version 1] Electronic toll collection can process 5 times more vehicles per hour than manual toll collection methods.

For the next two features, again please answer “yes” if you think it would be a good feature or “no” if you do not think it would be a good feature if applied to the road you most often use.

31. Tolls would only be taken by use of an electronic toll tag device attached to the windshield, eliminating any need to stop at toll booths.

- a) yes, this is a good feature
- b) no, this is not a good feature

32. A privacy fee would be charged monthly to keep electronic toll tag device information more protected.

- a) yes, this is a good feature
- b) no, this is not a good feature

We are almost at the end of the interview. Thank you for your co-operation. There are just a few more quick background questions I need to ask you.

33. What is highest level of education you have completed? _____ (get answer, then code)

- a) less than high school
- b) high school (or equivalent)
- c) associate’s or technical degree (or equivalent)
- d) bachelor’s degree
- e) master’s degree or higher

[If answer to question 17 is a or b ask 34, otherwise skip to 35]

34. What is your occupation? _____ (get actual occupation, then code)

(OSR to code among these categories:)

- a) Professional, Technical and Related
- b) Executive, Administrative, and Managerial
- c) Sales
- d) Administrative Support, Including Clerical
- e) Precision Production, Craft, and Repair
- f) Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors
- g) Transportation and Material Moving
- h) Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers
- i) Service, Except Private Household
- j) other: _____ (please specify)

35. What is your age? _____ (get actual number if possible)

- a) 19 or less
- b) 20-24
- c) 25-34
- d) 35-44

- e) 45-54
- f) 55-59
- g) 60-64
- h) 65-74
- i) 75-84
- j) 85 or more

36. How many people live in your household? _____ (get actual number)

37. What is your household's approximate annual income before taxes?

- a) Less than \$50,000 a year [Ask 38]
- b) Greater than or equal to \$50,000 a year [Ask 39]

(37. alternate to be pilot tested) What is your household's approximate annual income before taxes? _____ (get actual number if possible)

- a) 24,999 or less
- b) \$25,000 - \$49,999
- c) \$50,000 - \$74,999
- d) \$75,000 or more

38. Is your household's income more than \$25,000 a year?

- a) yes
- b) no

39. Is your household's income more than \$75,000 a year?

- a) yes
- b) no

Thank you very much for giving your time to this phone survey. We would appreciate your participation in a follow up survey that is available on-line or through the mail. For your participation in the follow up survey we would be happy to send you a free map of Texas.

40. Would you be willing to participate in the follow up portion of our survey as well?

- a) yes
- b) no [skip to 42]

41. Would you prefer the mail or on-line version?

- a) mail
- b) on-line

In order to send you information on the [follow-up] survey, we will need your mailing and email addresses. This information will be kept entirely confidential and will not in any way be used to identify your survey responses.

Thank you very much, we will contact you within a few weeks.

42. Are you interested in contact information for survey administrators or the website address for more information on this survey?

a) yes

b) no

Questions or concerns regarding this study can be directed to _____ at the Office of Survey Research. The phone number is 1-800-824-4761.

Information on this survey is posted at www.tollroads.hypermart.net.

Thank you again. Good-bye.

FAQ

Note: Asking for the person who has the most recent birthday in the household establishes a random sample within the household itself and eliminates the over representation of certain types of people.

Definitions

RUSH HOUR: A period of the day when the demands especially of traffic or business are at a peak, usually between 7:00-9:00 AM and 4:00-6:00 PM.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP: A partnership between the private sector and a taxpayer government agency to fund specific road projects.

COMMERCIAL TRUCKS: Heavier than standard passenger trucks, these vehicles are used for the transport of goods locally or between cities or regions.

MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY VEHICLES: A vehicle carrying 2 or more people

AREA: Designates an area no more than 25 miles in any direction from a respondents present dwelling

EMPLOYED FULL TIME: Work at least 35 hours a week

EMPLOYED PART TIME: Work less than 35 hours a week

FULL TIME STUDENT: Enrolled for at least 12 credit hours during the current semester for undergraduate, 9 credit hours for graduate school, or high school student.

HOMEMAKER: A person who manages a home and does not receive pay for that work

UNEMPLOYED: Not currently employed, but neither retired nor a homemaker

RETIRED: Having concluded one's working or professional career

LOCAL STREETS: Streets within an urban area that have intersections controlled by stop signs and/or traffic signals

LIMITED ACCESS NON-TOLLED ROADS: Roads 4 lanes or greater that are not tolled and are accessed by on/off ramps.

TOLL ROADS: Roads that require payment of a toll to use

RURAL ROADS: Roads that run primarily through areas with little or no development

See Department of Labor website for complete job listings:

<http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/ocsm/commain.htm>

PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, and RELATED: e.g. doctors, lawyers, engineers, bankers

EXECUTIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE, and MANAGERIAL: e.g. CEOs, division managers, sales managers, shop foremen

SALES: self explanatory

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, including CLERICAL: e.g file clerks, office assistants, etc.

PRECISION PRODUCTION, CRAFT, and REPAIR: e.g mechanics, shoe repair, small craft industries such as plumbing, carpentry etc.

MACHINE OPERATORS, ASSEMBLERS, and INSPECTORS: Manufacturing occupations

TRANSPORTATION and MATERIAL MOVING: Truck drivers, airline pilots, taxi drivers

HANDLERS, EQUIPMENT CLEANERS, HELPERS, and LABORERS: Generally manufacturing or construction occupations

SERVICE, except PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD: Generally service workers: retail, call center workers

Information Sources

For fiscal year 2003, TxDOT had a 5.2 billion dollar budget, of which 42% was spent on maintenance and 33% was spent on construction.

Texas Department of Transportation, 2003 Annual Summary. <http://www.dot.state.tx.us>

Americans car owners pay an average of over \$7,754 per year to own and operate a car.

American Automobile Association.

<http://www.aaamissouri.com/news/library/drivingcost/driving.html>

Texans currently pay 38.4 cents on every gallon in combined 20 cent state and 18.4 cent federal gas taxes. However, 26 other states have higher gas taxes with the highest rate being 49.4 cents per gallon.

Texas Department of Transportation, Finance Division:
http://www.taxadmin.org/fta/rate/motor_fl.html

In the United States, more than 75% of workers drive alone to their jobs.

US Department of Transportation- Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Summary, State Transportation Profile, December 2003.

Electronic toll collection can process 5 times more vehicles per hour than manual toll collection methods. Texas Department of Transportation

Consistency Check Coding

- Answer to 2 should be less than or equal to answer to 1.
- Answer to 16 should be greater than or equal to 15.
- Answer to 25 should be less than 31.
- If answer to 23 or 24 is bike or walk check with answer to 27 if type of road is not local streets.
- If answer to 23 or 24 is bike or walk check with answer to 28 if distance from school is greater than 5 miles.
- If answer to 27 is local streets check with answer to 28 if distance is greater than 5 miles.
- Check answer to 33 with answer to 35 if:
 - o Age of 18 with associate's or technical degree or higher.
 - o Age of 20 or under with bachelor's degree or higher.
 - o Age of 21 or under with master's degree or higher.
- Answer to 36 should be greater than or equal to 1.