

UTC Project Information	
Project Title	What Do Americans Think About Federal Tax Options to Support Public Transit, Highways, and Local Streets and Roads? Results from Year 6 of a National Survey
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Funding Source(s) and Amounts Provided (by each agency or organization)	Research and Innovative Technology Administration University Transportation Centers Program (\$36,294.50) California Department of Transportation Office of Research—MS42 (\$36,294.50)
Total Project Cost	\$72,589
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Start and End Dates	January 2015 – June 2015
Brief Description of Research Project	<p>This report summarizes the results of year six of a national random-digit-dial public opinion poll asking 1,503 respondents if they would support various tax options for raising federal transportation revenues, with a special focus on understanding support for increasing revenues for public transit. Eleven specific tax options tested were variations on raising the federal gas tax rate, creating a new mileage tax, and creating a new federal sales tax. Other questions probed perceptions related to public transit, including knowledge and opinions about federal taxes to support transit. In addition, the survey collected data on standard sociodemographic factors, travel behavior (public transit usage, annual miles driven, and vehicle fuel efficiency), and respondents' views on the quality of their local transportation system and their priorities for government spending on transportation in their state. All of this information is used to assess support levels for the tax options among different population subgroups.</p> <p>The survey results show that a majority of Americans would support higher taxes for transportation—under certain conditions. For example, a gas tax increase of 10¢ per gallon to improve road maintenance was supported by 71% of respondents, whereas support levels dropped to just 31% if the revenues were</p>

	<p>to be used more generally to maintain and improve the transportation system. For tax options in which the revenues were to be spent for undefined transportation purposes, support levels varied considerably by what kind of tax would be imposed, with a sales tax much more popular than either a gas tax increase or a new mileage tax.</p> <p>With respect to public transit, the survey results show that most people want good public transit service in their state. In addition, two-thirds of respondents supported spending gas tax revenues on transit. However, questions exploring different methods to raise new revenues found relatively low levels of support for raising gas tax or transit fare rates. Also, not all respondents were well informed about how transit is funded, with only half knowing that fares do not cover the full cost of transit.</p>
<p>Describe Implementation of Research Outcomes (or why not implemented)</p>	<p>Agrawal, Asha. "What do People Think of Mileage Fees: A Review of Evidence." Presentation at the IBTTA's Transportation Finance and Road Usage Charging Conference, Portland, OR, April 28, 2015.</p> <p>Agrawal, Asha. "What do People Think of Mileage Fees: A Review of Evidence." Presentation at the California Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, CA, June 26, 2015.</p> <p>Agrawal, Asha. "Funding Public Transit in the US – Trends from an Annual Survey Series." Presentation at the American Public Transportation Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, October 5, 2015.</p> <p>Agrawal, Asha. "What Do Americans Think About Federal Tax Options to Support Public Transit, Highways, and Local Streets and Roads? Results from Year Six of a National Survey." Presentation at the 95th Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, Washington, DC, January 12, 2016.</p>
<p>Place Any Photos Here</p>	

<p>Impacts/Benefits of Implementation (actual, not anticipated)</p>	<p>This project will be of use to transportation professionals, legislators, and members of the public working to identify sustainable sources of transportation revenue. Over the past decades, the transportation revenues available from traditional sources such as state and federal gas taxes have fallen significantly in real terms, and especially in real dollars per mile traveled. At the same time, the US transportation system requires critical—and expensive—system upgrades. For example, a large portion of the national highway system is in need of major rehabilitation, and there is growing desire at all levels of government to substantially upgrade and expand infrastructure to support transit, walking, and bicycling, modes that have been relatively neglected in the past fifty years.</p> <p>This dilemma of growing needs and shrinking revenues can be resolved in only two ways: either the nation dramatically lowers its goals for system preservation and enhancement, or new revenues must be raised. If the latter is to happen, legislators must be convinced that doing so is politically feasible. Surveys such as this one play an important role in helping transportation professionals, legislators, and interested members of the public to understand public opinion. However, relatively few national surveys probe Americans about their views on transportation taxes and fees, and those that do usually ask very few questions. This survey, by contrast, will focus solely on transportation finance options.</p>
<p>Web Links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports • Project Website 	<p>Final report (MNTRC Website): http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1428.html</p> <p>Final report (TRB Website): http://trid.trb.org/view/2015/M/1359323</p>