

Wednesday, March 20, 2024
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Virtual Meeting:

<https://clackamascounty.zoom.us/j/89359977218?pwd=eFNkVGZ2OGhzb2dhTXhMYTYraHIJUT09>

Telephone option: 1 (719) 359 4580

Agenda

- 12:00 p.m. Welcome & Introductions**
- 12:05 p.m. DHM Regional Tolling Survey**
- **Public opinion on congestion and road quality**
Presenting: John Horvick, DHM; Kara Krnacik, DHM
- 12:40 p.m. What's Next: Outlook on the state legislature and tolling**
- **Special Subcommittee on Transportation Planning (SSTP)**
 - **Legislative debrief and outlook**
 - **Gov. Kotek's letter to OTC**
Presenting: Trent Wilson, PGA
Member Discussion
- 1:15 p.m. Updates and Other Business**

Attachments:

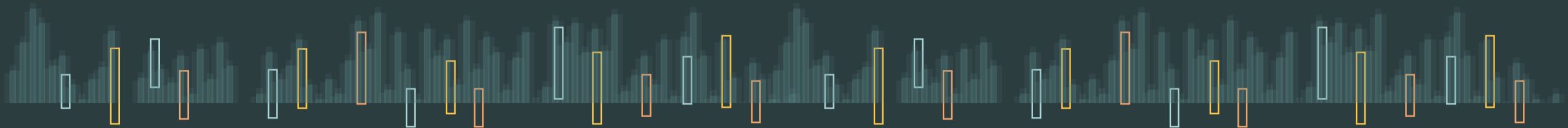
DHM Presentation: Regional Tolling Survey, Feb. 2024	Page 02
Letter: Gov. Kotek to OTC, March 11, 2024	Page 38
Oregonlive.com: <i>Gov. Tina Kotek shelves plans for I-5, I-205 tolls in Portland area</i> , March 11, 2024	Page 40



Regional Tolling Survey

February 2024

Prepared for the cities of West Linn, Tualatin, and Wilsonville, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555, and the Stafford Hamlet



Research Purpose

- Prepared for the cities of West Linn, Tualatin, and Wilsonville, and the United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555, and the Stafford Hamlet
- Gauge public opinion about congestion and road quality in the Portland metro region
- Assess general awareness of tolling and its purpose
- Assess awareness and support of current ODOT tolling plans (Regional Mobility Pricing Project and the I-205 & Abernethy Bridge Project)
- Gauge interest in alternative methods to fund transportation

Methodology

- Hybrid (phone and text-to-online) survey of N=600 Portland metro region voters (Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties)
- Conducted February 7-13, 2024; 14 minutes to complete
- Quotas were set by age, gender, race, education, income, county, and political party affiliation to ensure a representative sample
- Margin of error $\pm 4.0\%$
- Due to rounding, some totals may differ by ± 1 from the sum of separate responses.
- ODOT's tolling proposals were tested twice to understand how voter opinions differ after learning more information. **Respondents followed the subsequent flow through the survey:**



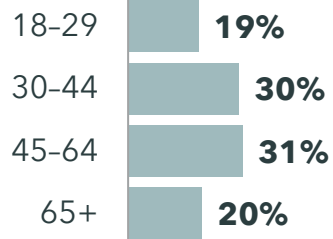
Who we heard from



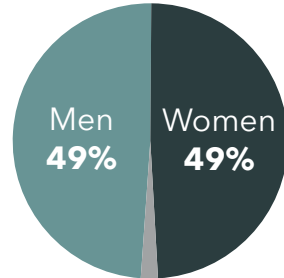
Demographic breakdown of survey respondents

N=600 Tri-County Voters

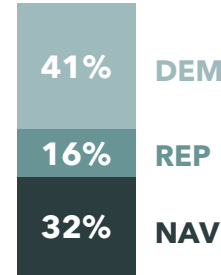
AGE



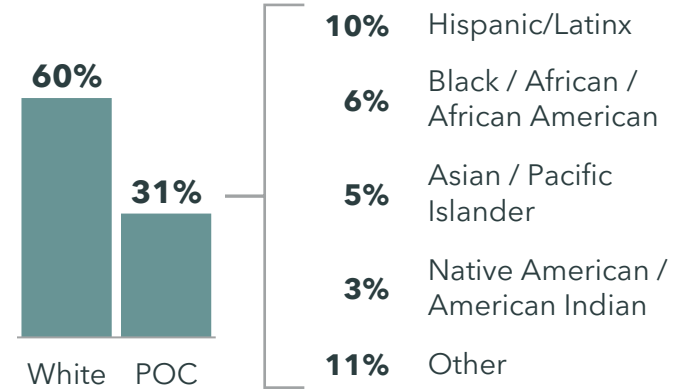
GENDER



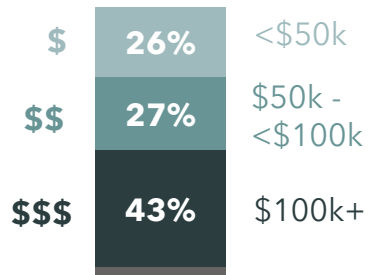
PARTY



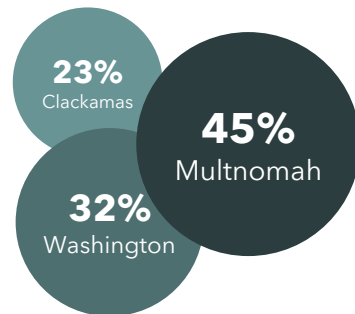
RACE / ETHNICITY



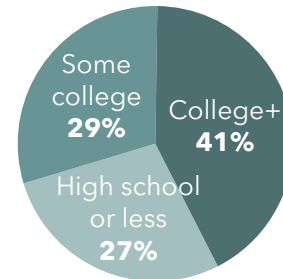
INCOME



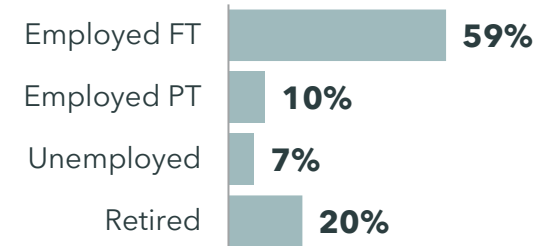
COUNTY



EDUCATION

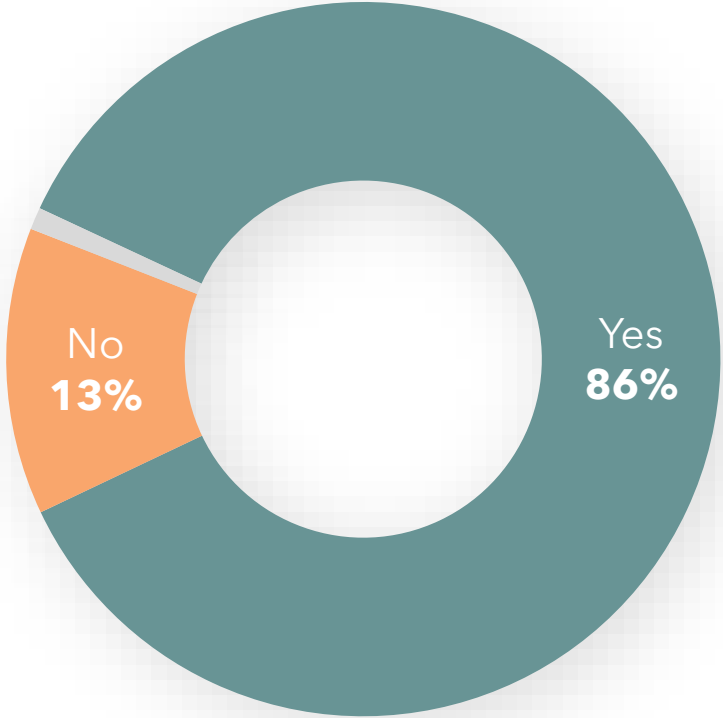


EMPLOYMENT STATUS

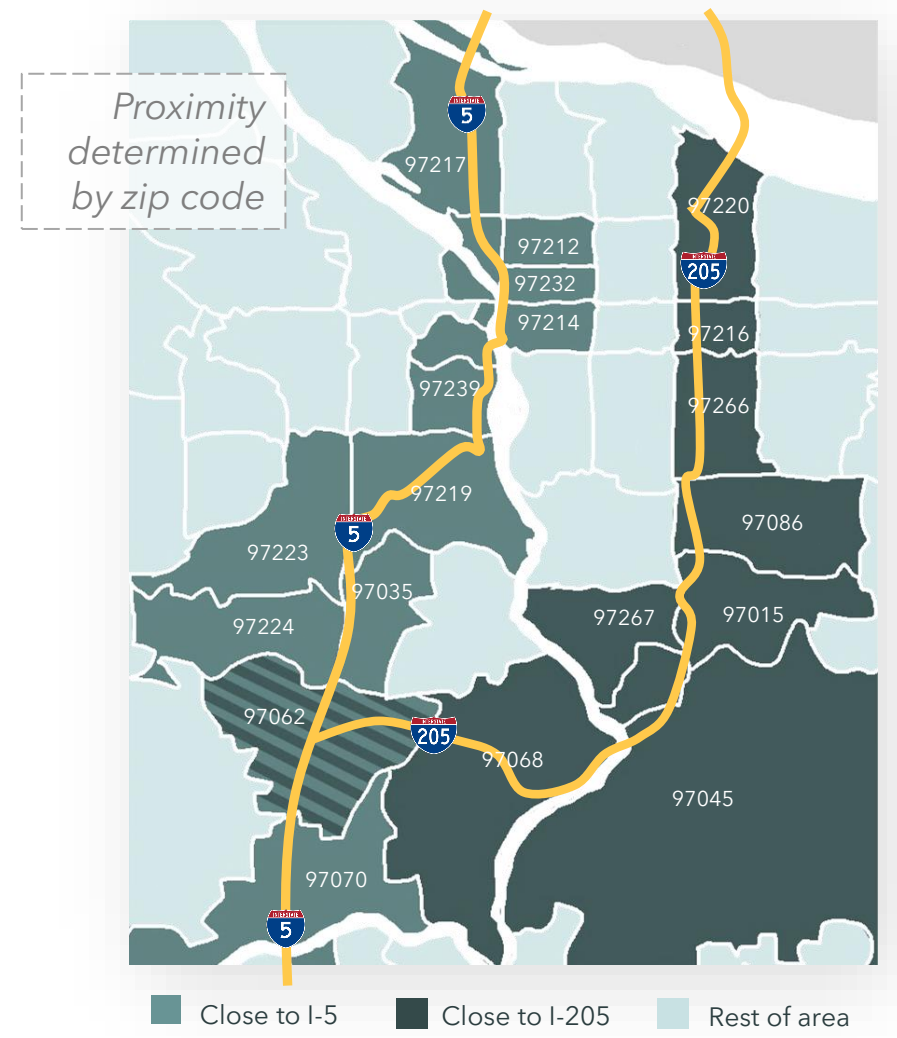
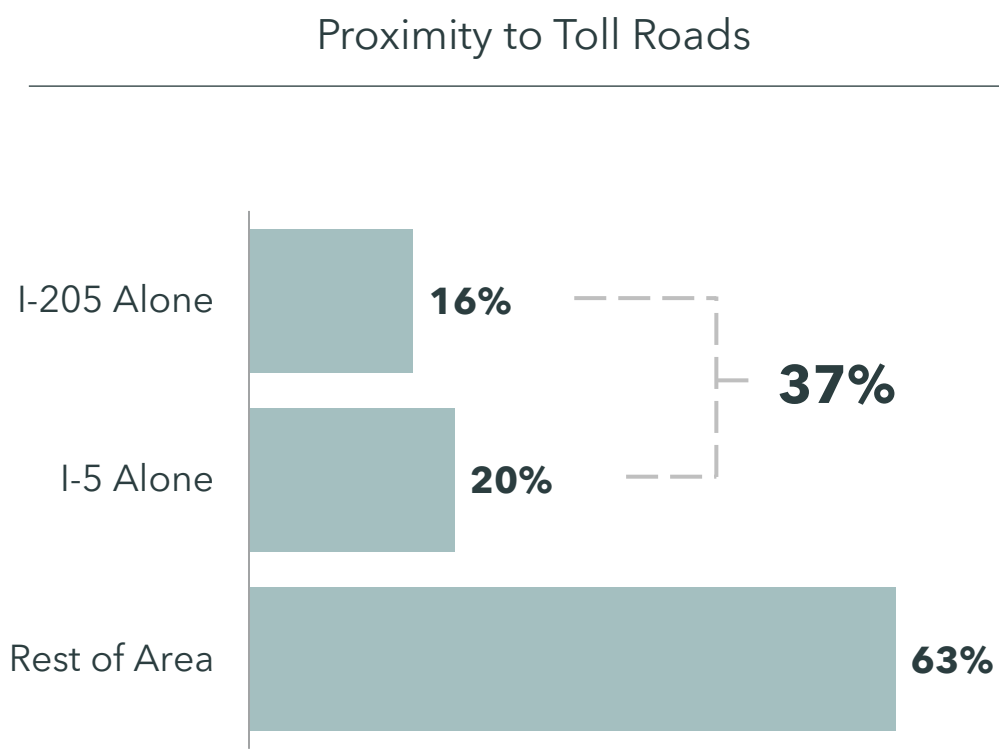


Approximately 9 in 10 voters in the Portland metro region own or lease a vehicle.

Do you own or lease a vehicle?

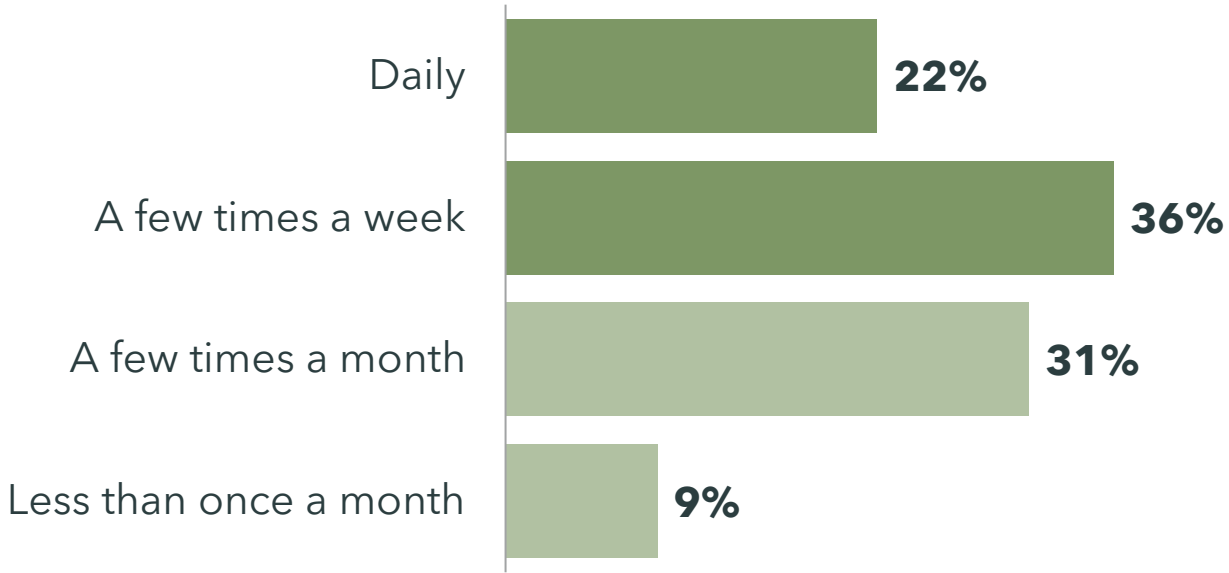


Approximately 2 in 5 voters in the Portland metro region live near at least one proposed toll road.



Over half of voters drive on either I-5 or I-205 a few times a week or more—with approximately 1 in 4 using the highways daily.

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

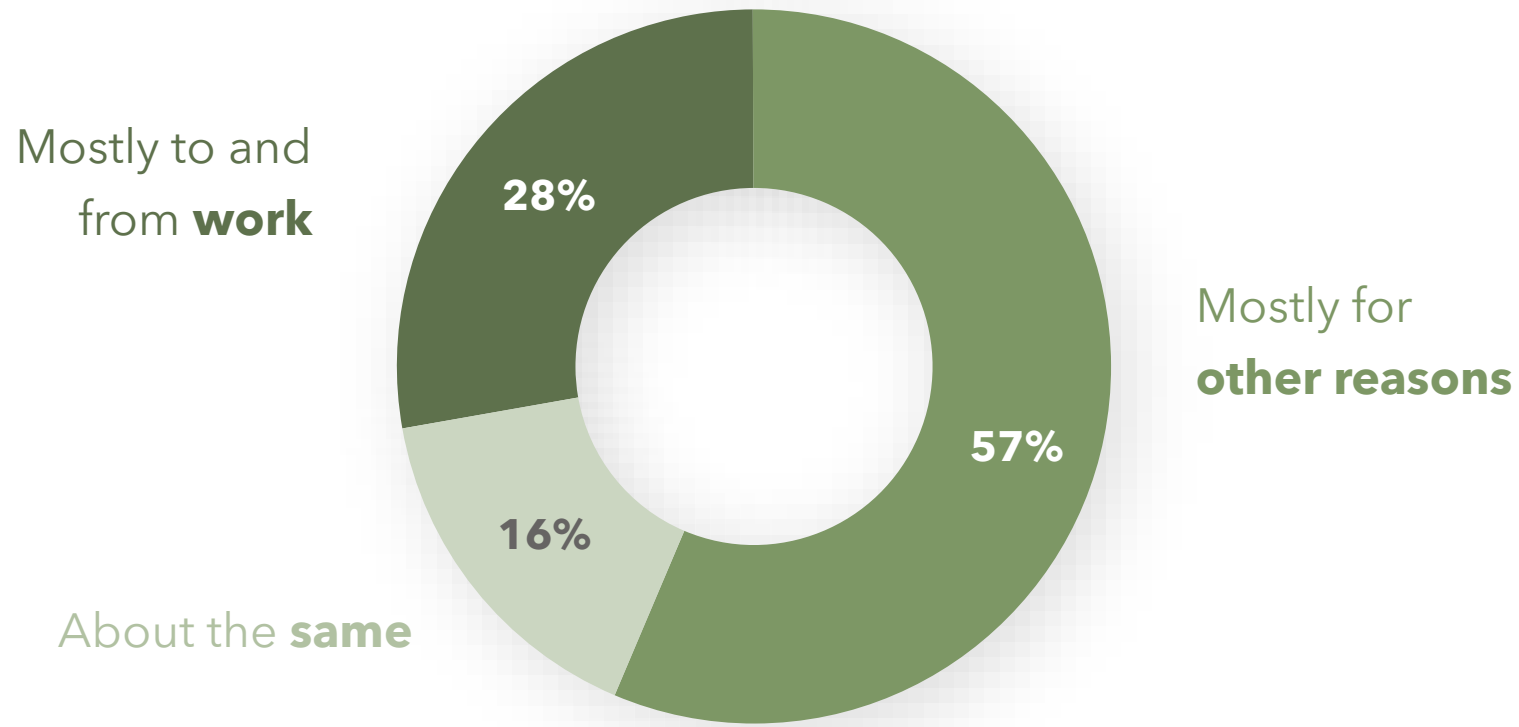


58%

Drive on I-5 and I-205 a **few times a week or more**

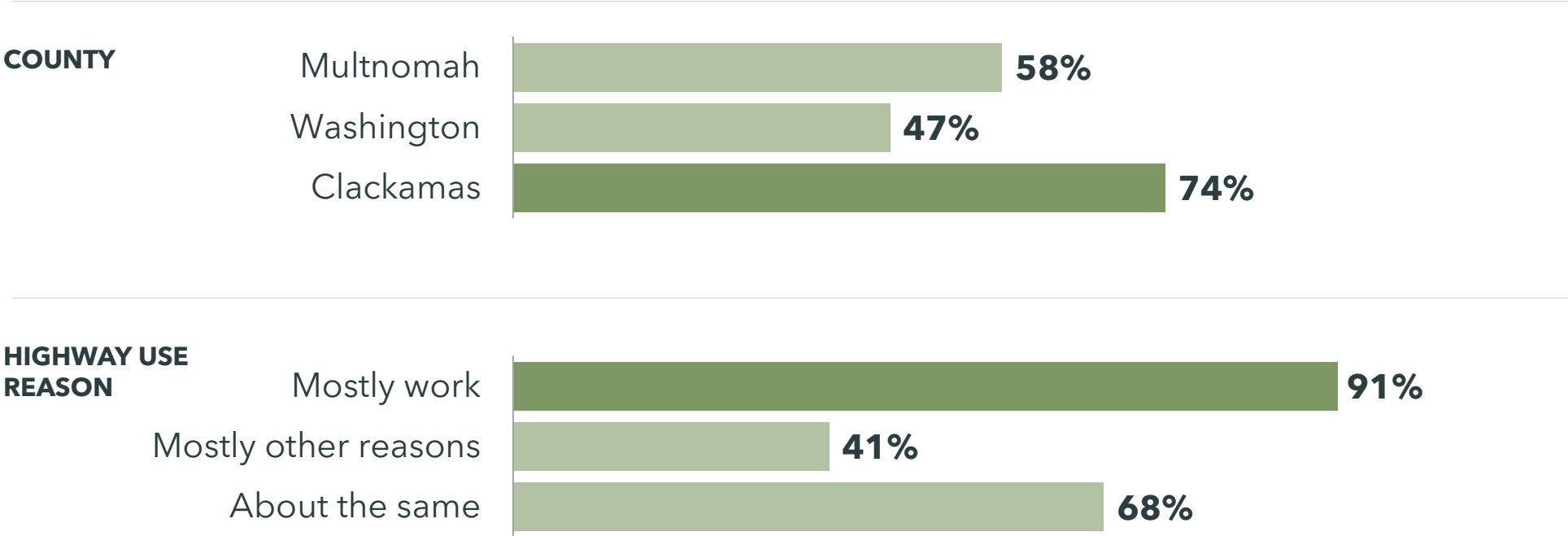
Of those who use the highways, voters are more likely to be using them for reasons other than commuting to work.

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? (n=591)



Those from Clackamas County and those commuting to work drive on I-5 and I-205 with the highest frequency.

% total those who drive on I-5 and I-205 **a few times a week or more**



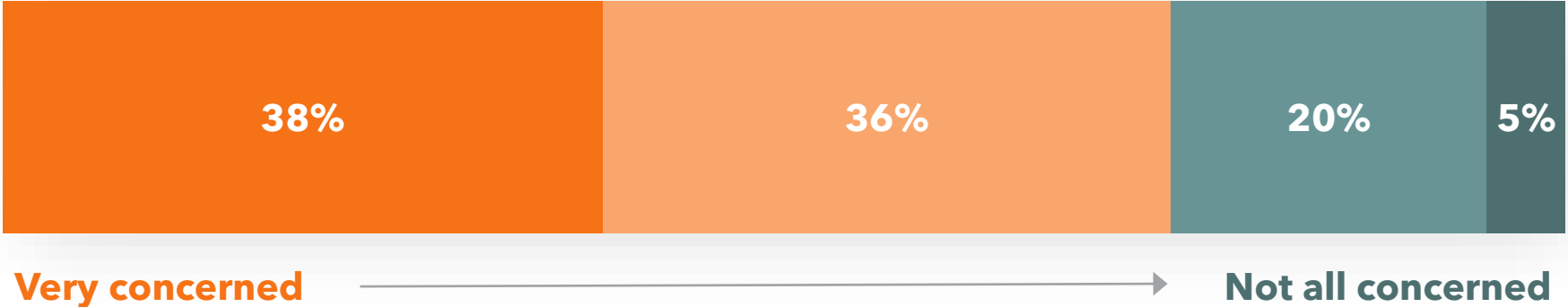
Transportation Attitudes



The quality of major roads and highways is concerning to 3 in 4 voters in the Portland metro region.

74%

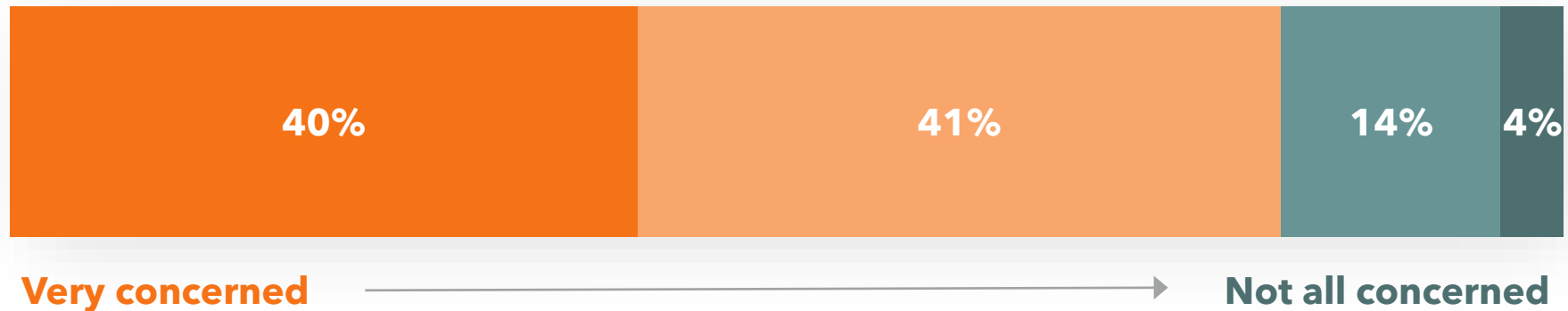
Are **very/somewhat** concerned about the **quality of major roads and highways** in the Portland metro region.



Additionally, traffic congestion on major roads and highways is of high concern for most voters.

81%

Are **very/somewhat** concerned about the **traffic congestion on major roads and highways** in the Portland metro region.



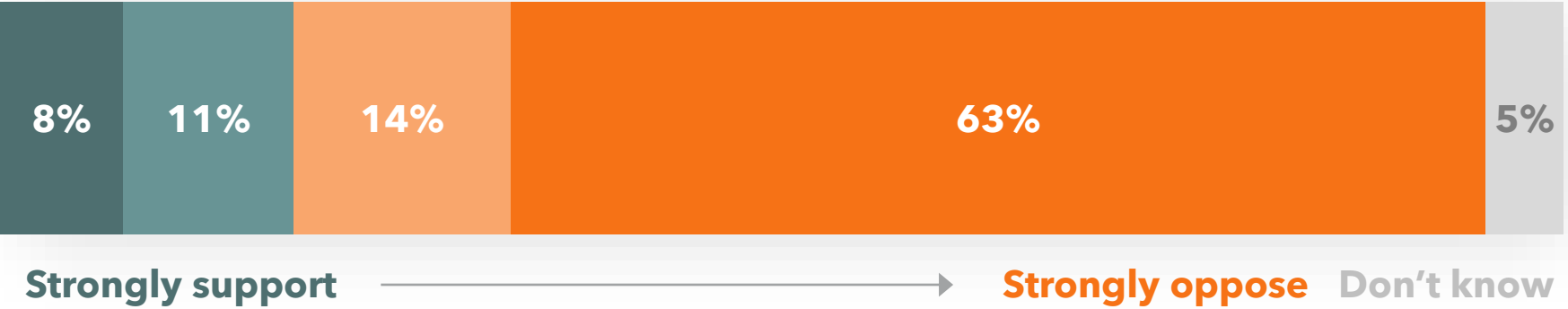
General Tolling Attitudes



Over 3 in 4 Portland metro region voters are opposed to tolls—with nearly two-thirds being strongly opposed.

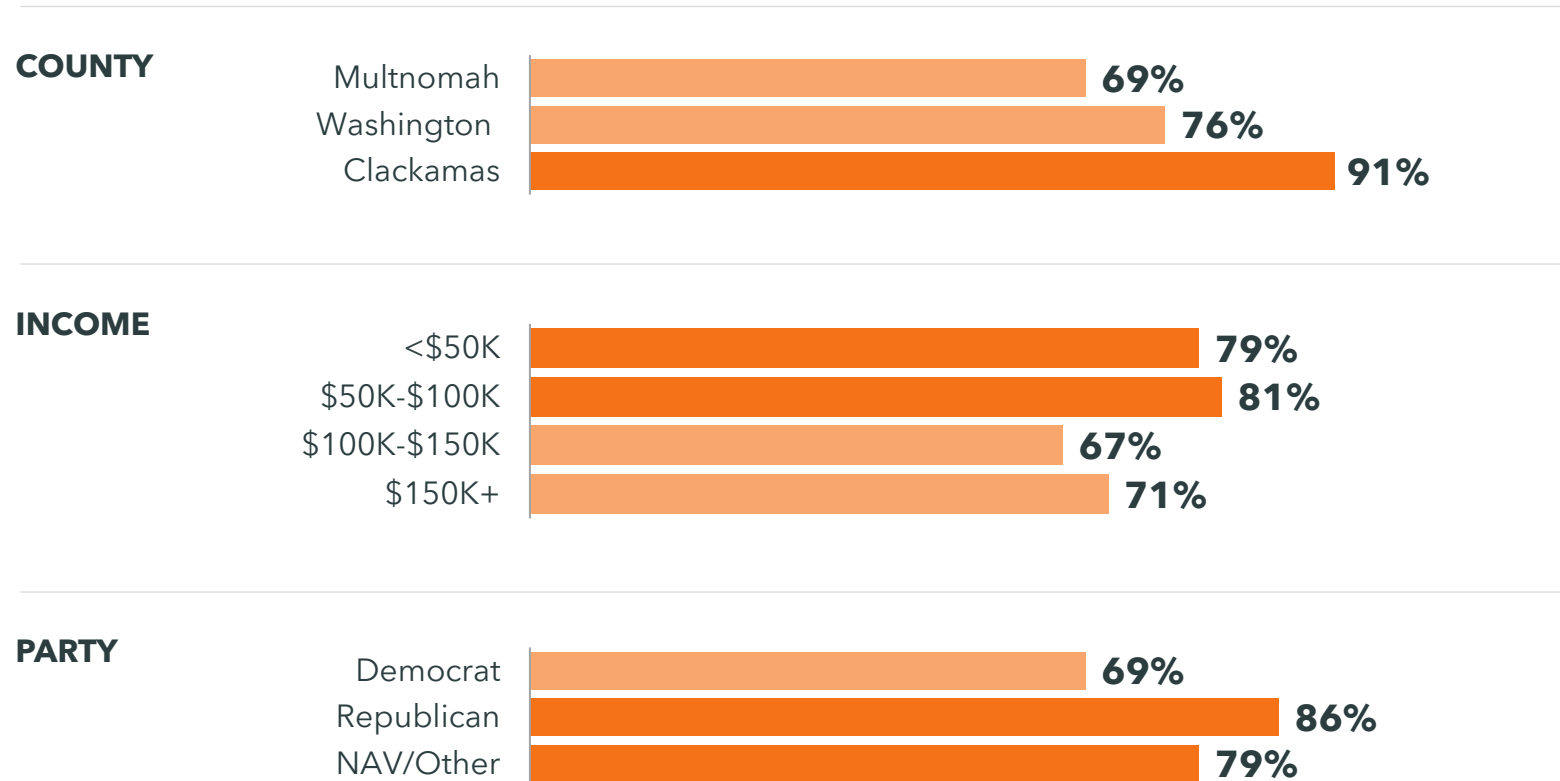
76%

Are generally **very/somewhat** opposed to tolls in the Portland metro region.



Clackamas County voters, those making less than \$100k/year, and Republicans and non-affiliated voters are more likely to oppose tolling than their counterparts.

Total general opposition to tolls by:



Proximity to I-205 and frequency of road use correlates with opposition to tolls in the region, but opposition remains high across geographies and driving behaviors.

Total general opposition to tolls by:

PROXIMITY TO TOLL ROADS



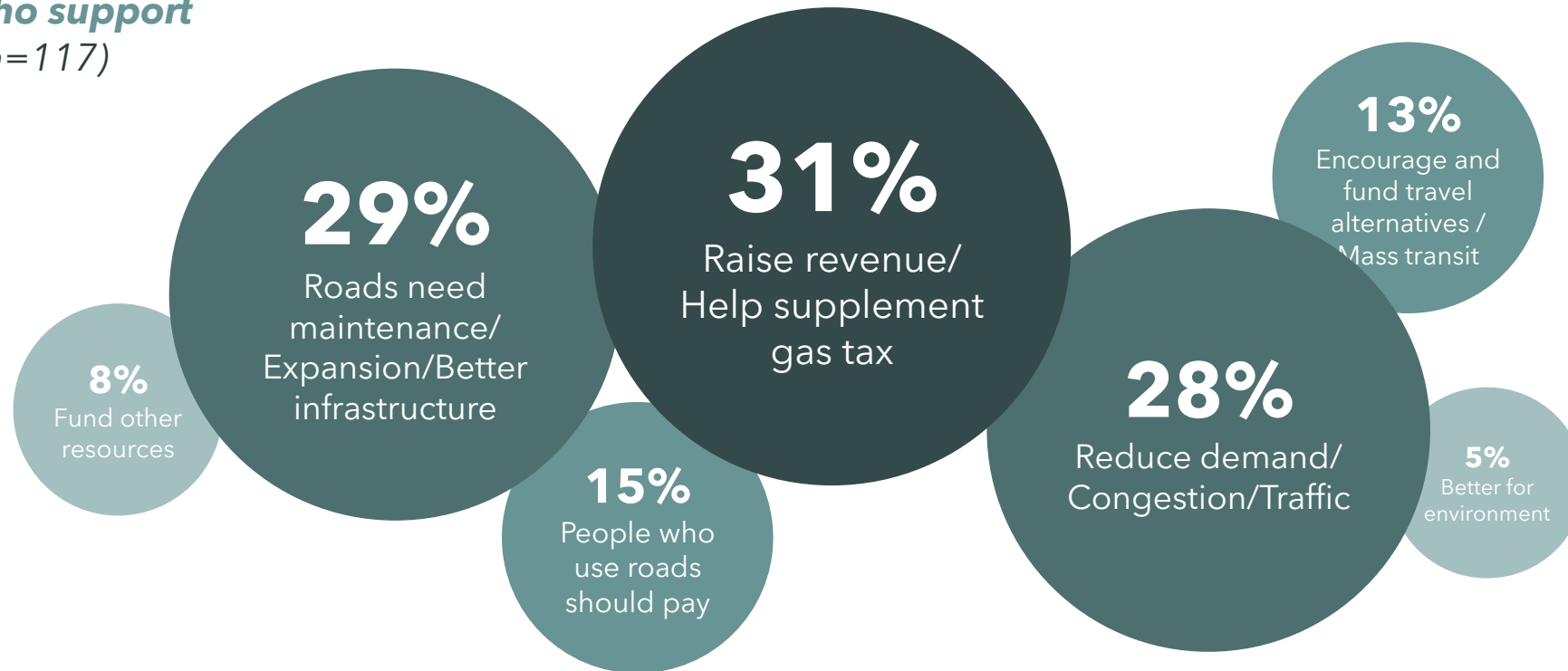
HIGHWAY USE FREQUENCY



Supporters of tolling identify needing to increase revenue, better road maintenance, and decrease congestion as core reasons they support tolling.

Why do you support using tolls in the Portland metro area?

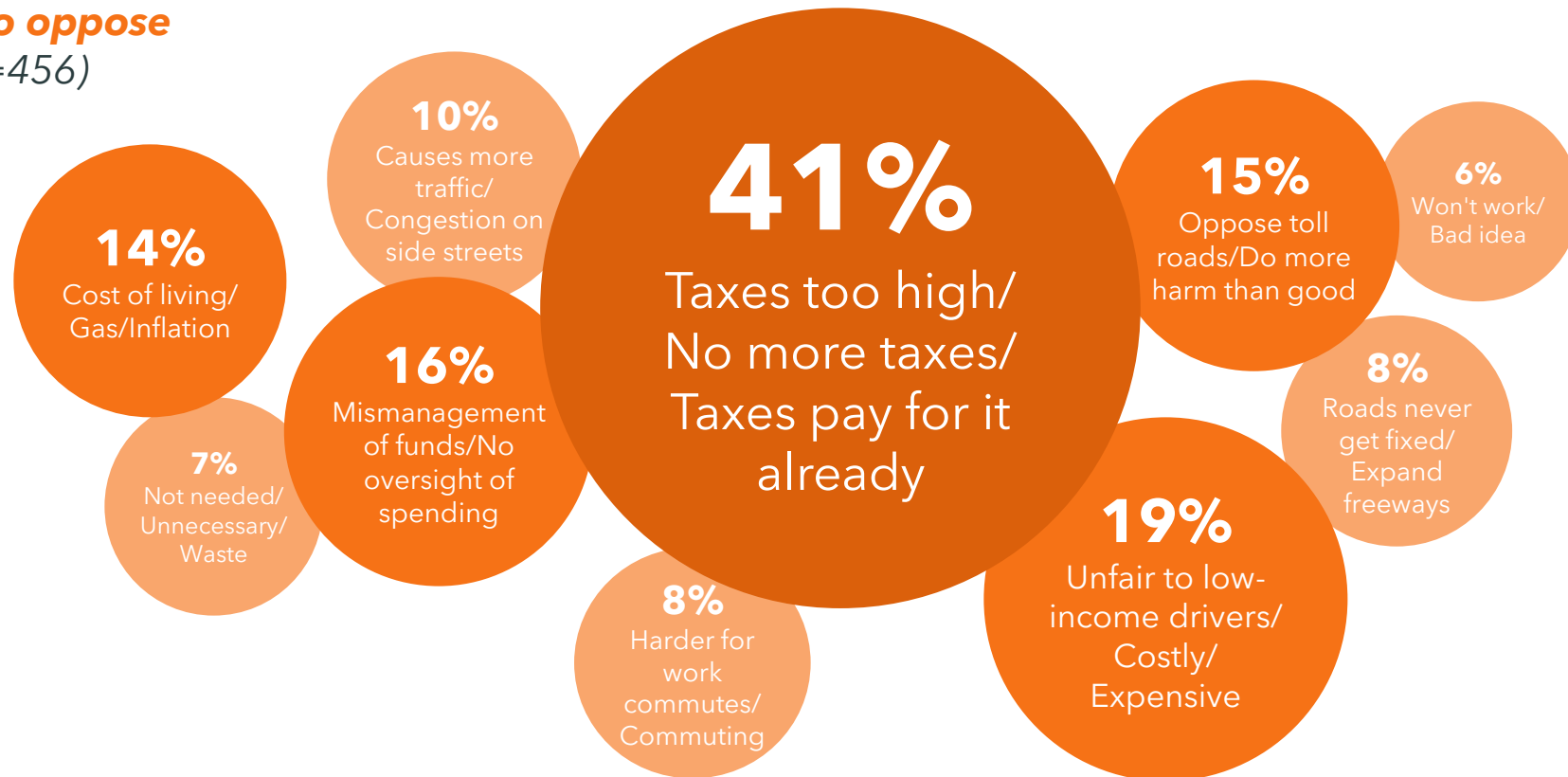
Those who support tolling (n=117)



Voters oppose tolling because they feel overtaxed and believe their current taxes already fund transportation infrastructure.

Why do you oppose using tolls in the Portland metro area?

Those who oppose tolling (n=456)

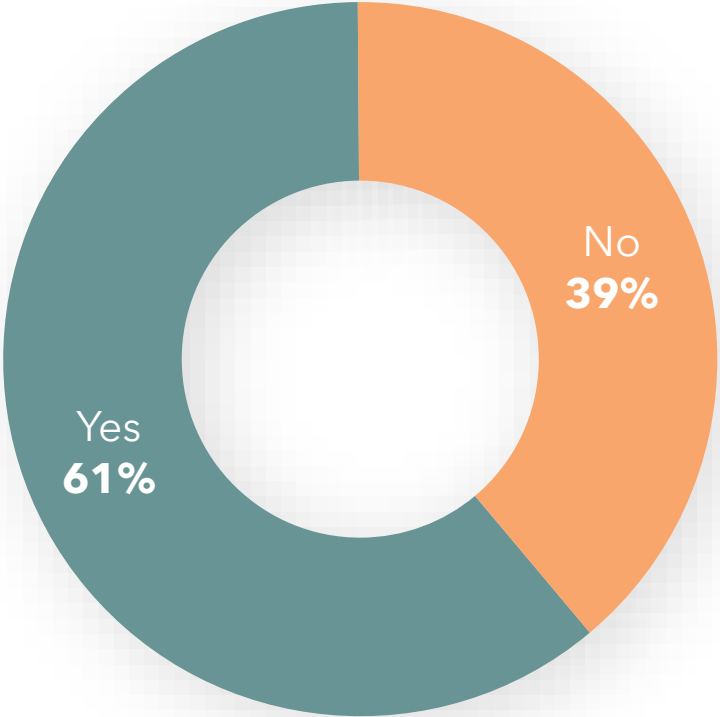


ODOT Tolling Proposals



Most Portland metro region voters are aware of ODOT's tolling proposals to some extent.

Have you heard or read anything about ODOT's tolling proposals in the Portland metro region?

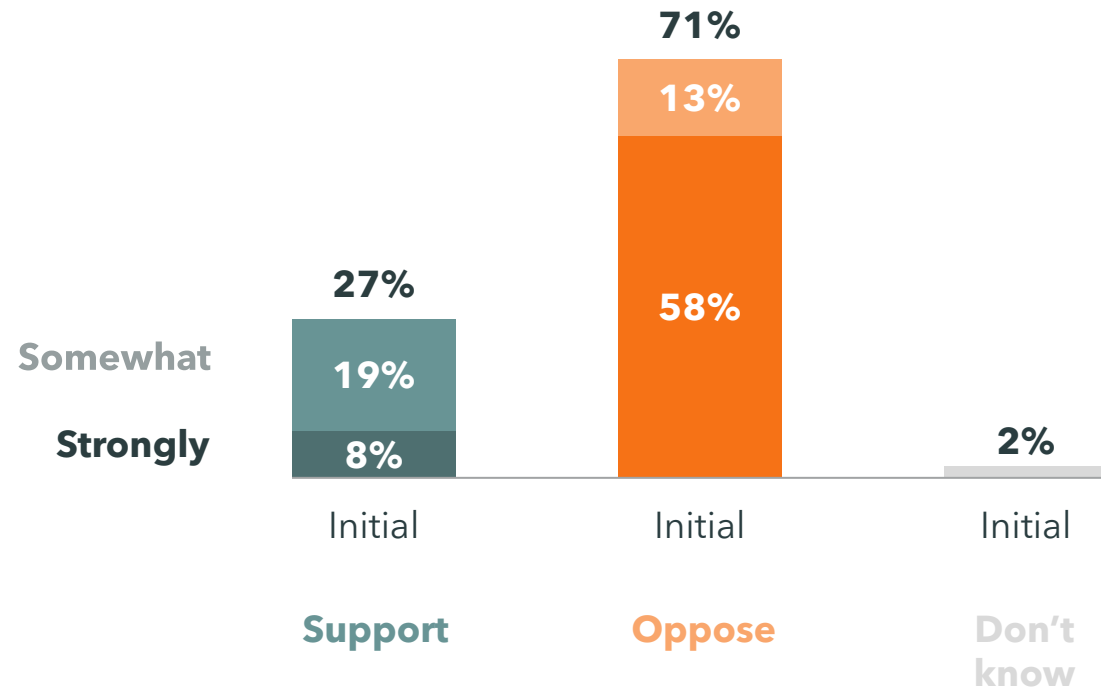


71% of voters in the region oppose the RMPP, with more than half expressing strong opposition.

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.

Do you support or oppose the Regional Mobility Pricing Project?

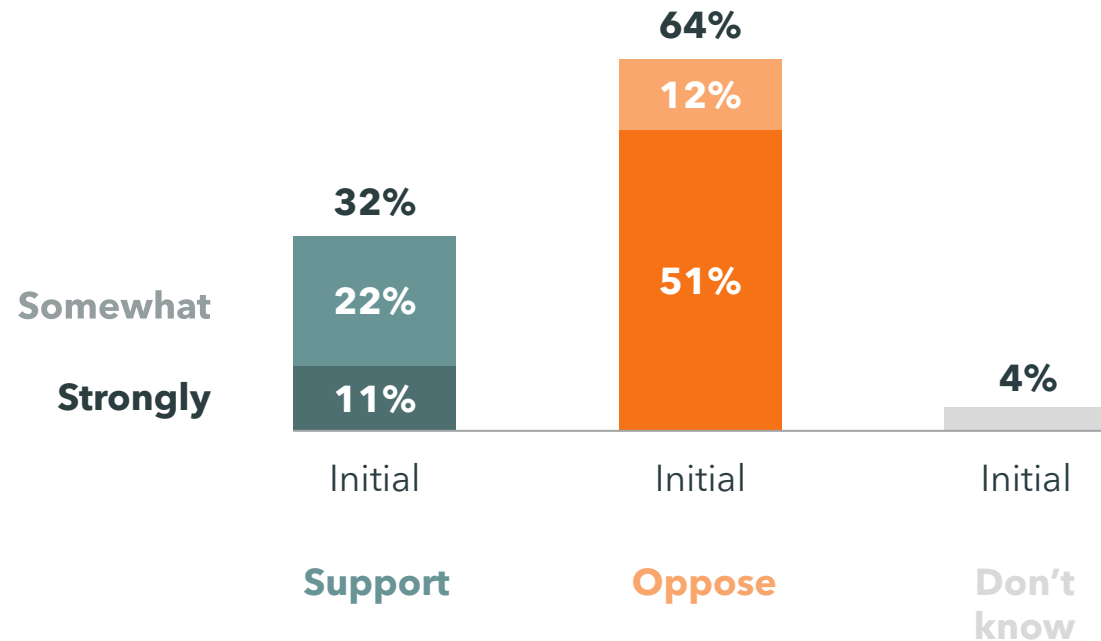


64% of voters in the region oppose the I-205 and Abernethy Bridge Project, with more than half expressing strong opposition.

The I-205 and Abernethy Bridge Toll Project would toll the Abernethy Bridge, which is the I-205 bridge across the Willamette 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.

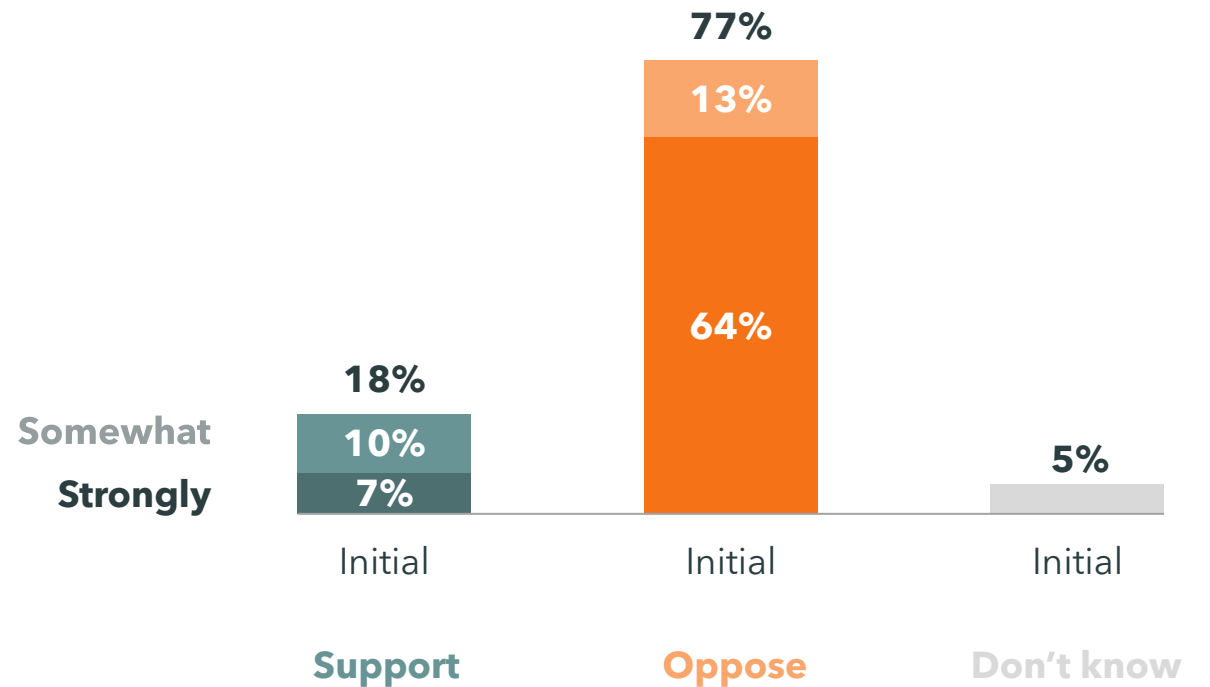
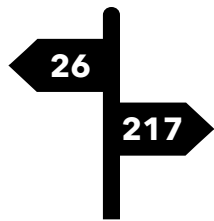
Do you support or oppose the I-205 and Abernethy Bridge Toll Project that would toll the Abernethy Bridge, which is the I-205 bridge across the Willamette River between Oregon City and West Linn?



Nearly 8 in 10 voters in the region oppose the idea of adding tolls to Highways 26 and 217.

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

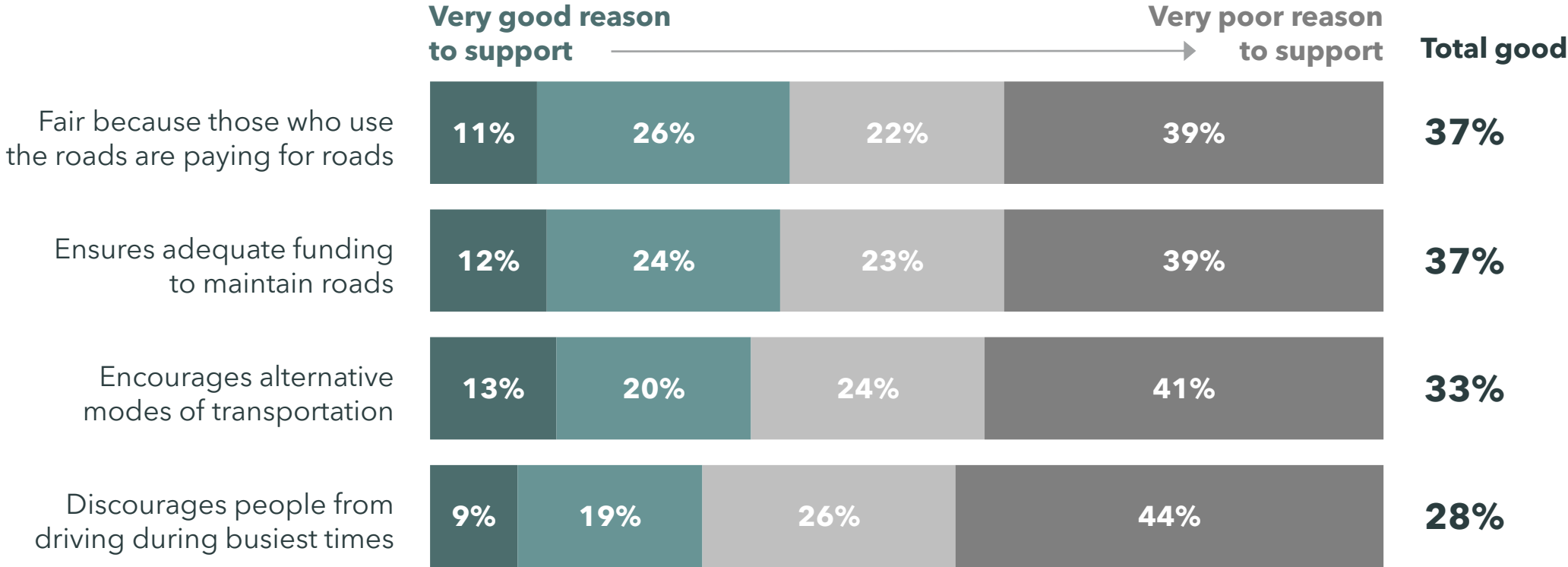
Would you support or oppose adding any additional tolls like these?



Support Messaging



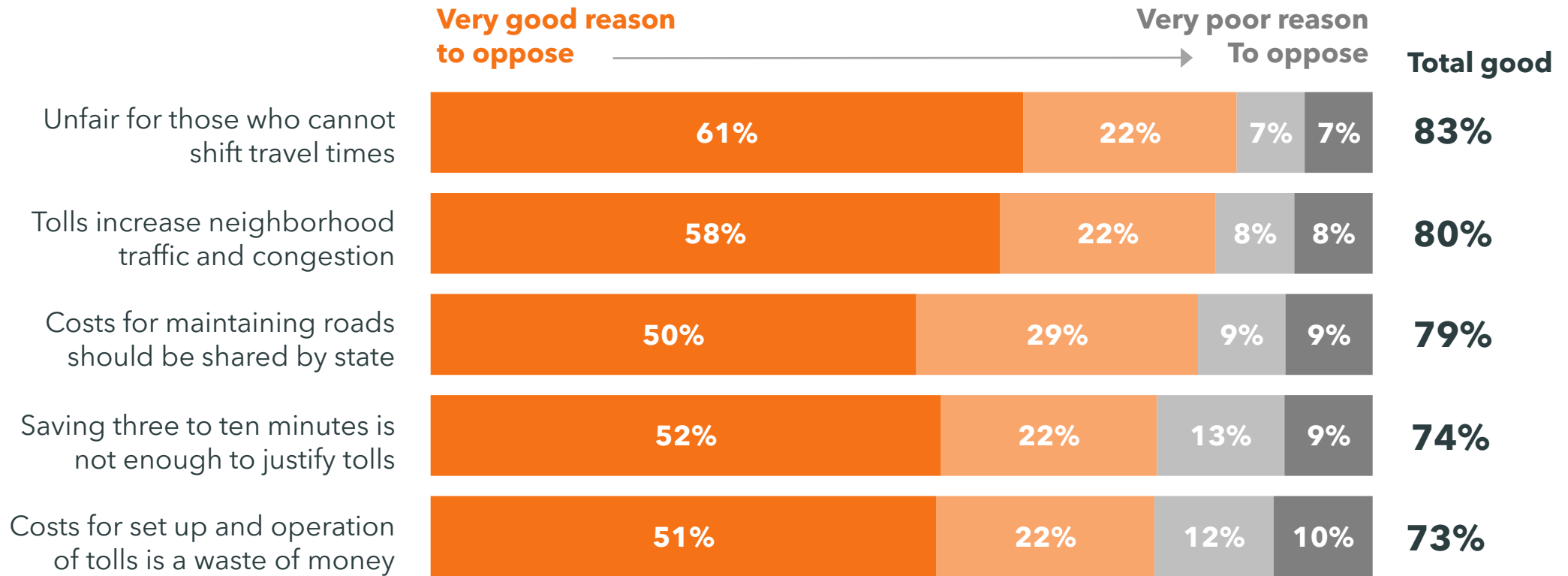
Voters generally do not find the statements supporting tolling to be compelling.



Oppose Messaging

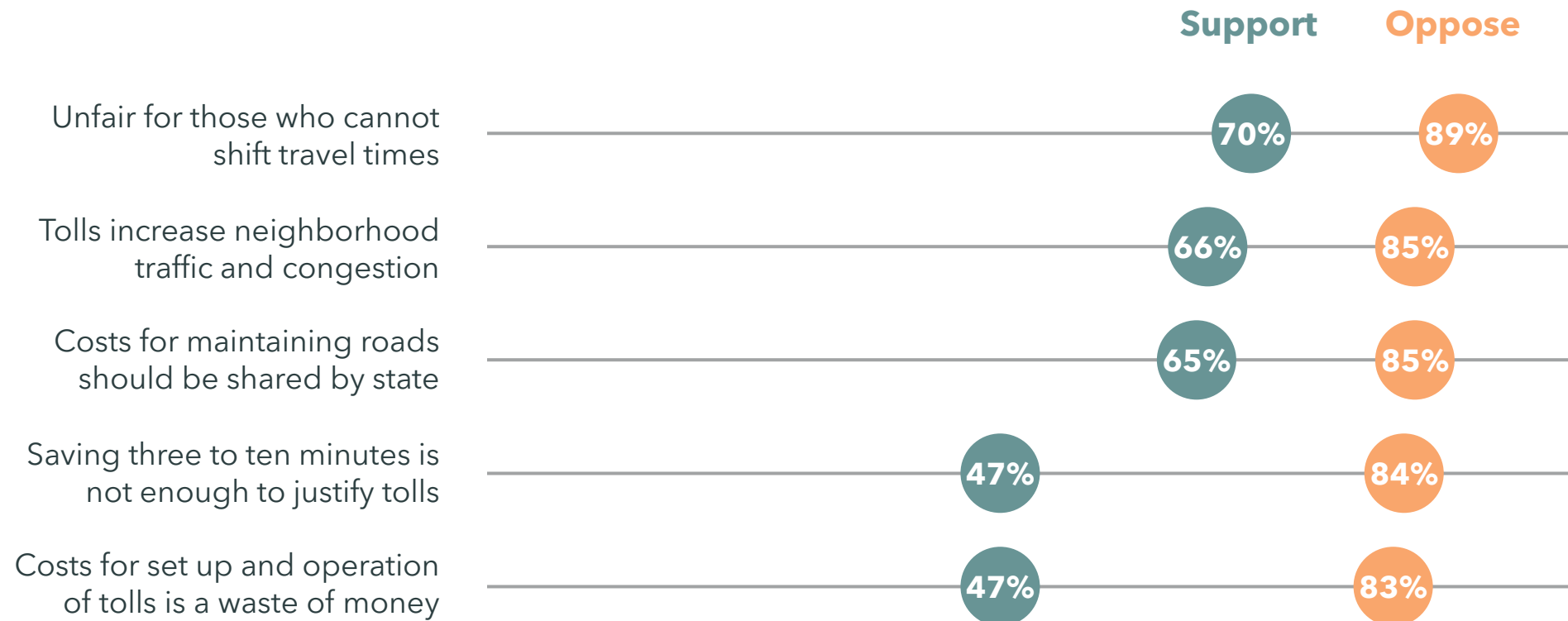


Around three-quarters of voters found all statements in opposition to tolling convincing.



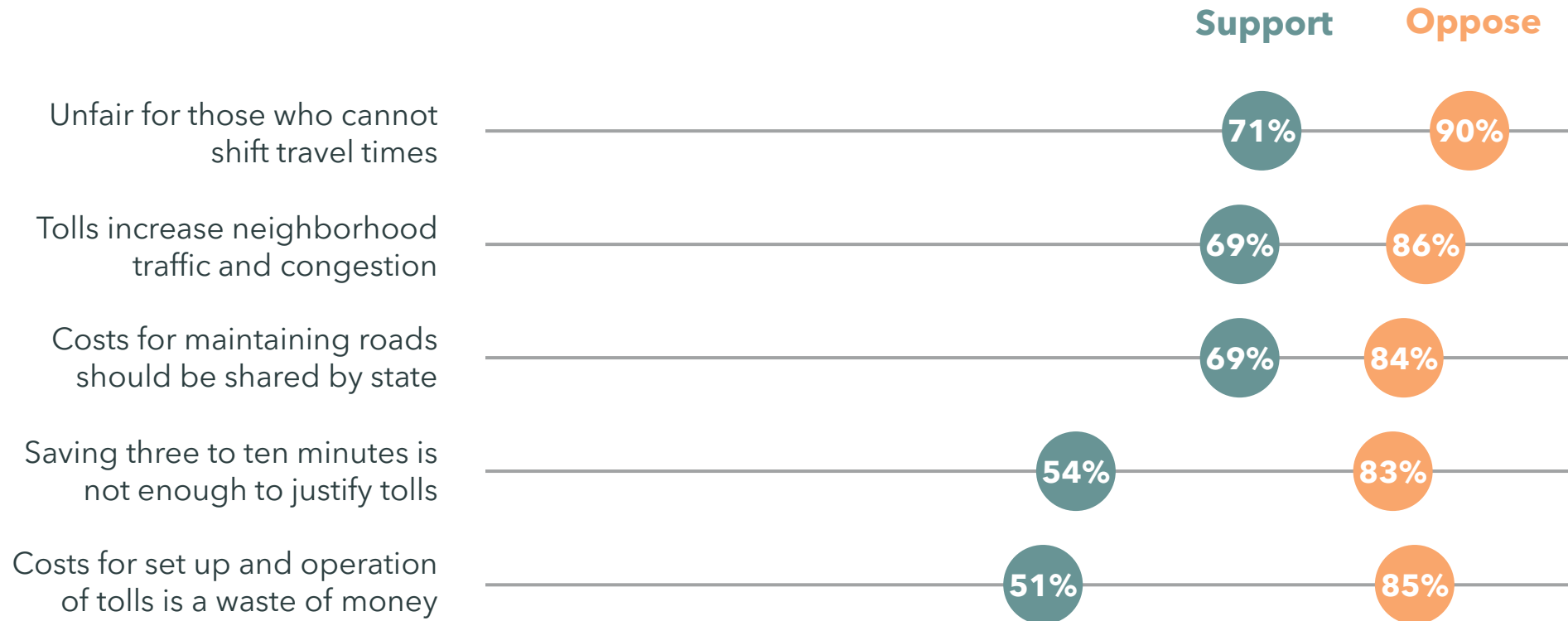
More than half of RMPP supporters see arguments against tolling related to equity, traffic diversion, and sharing road maintenance costs as valid reasons to oppose tolling.

Endorsement of anti-tolling statements by stance on RMPP



Most supporters of the Abernethy Bridge toll view opposition statements as valid, as do those opposed to the toll, though at higher rates.

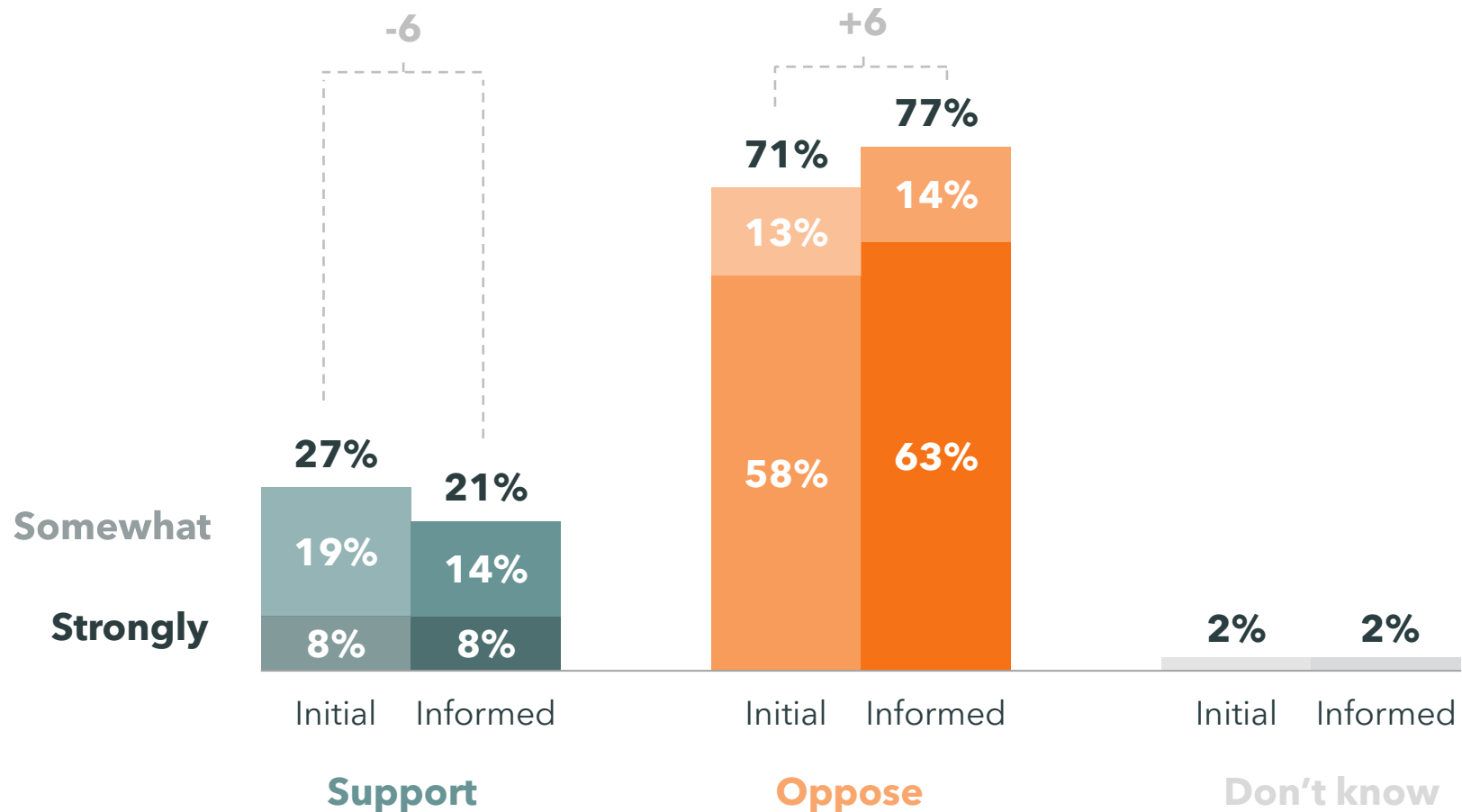
Endorsement of anti-tolling statements by stance on Abernathy Bridge toll



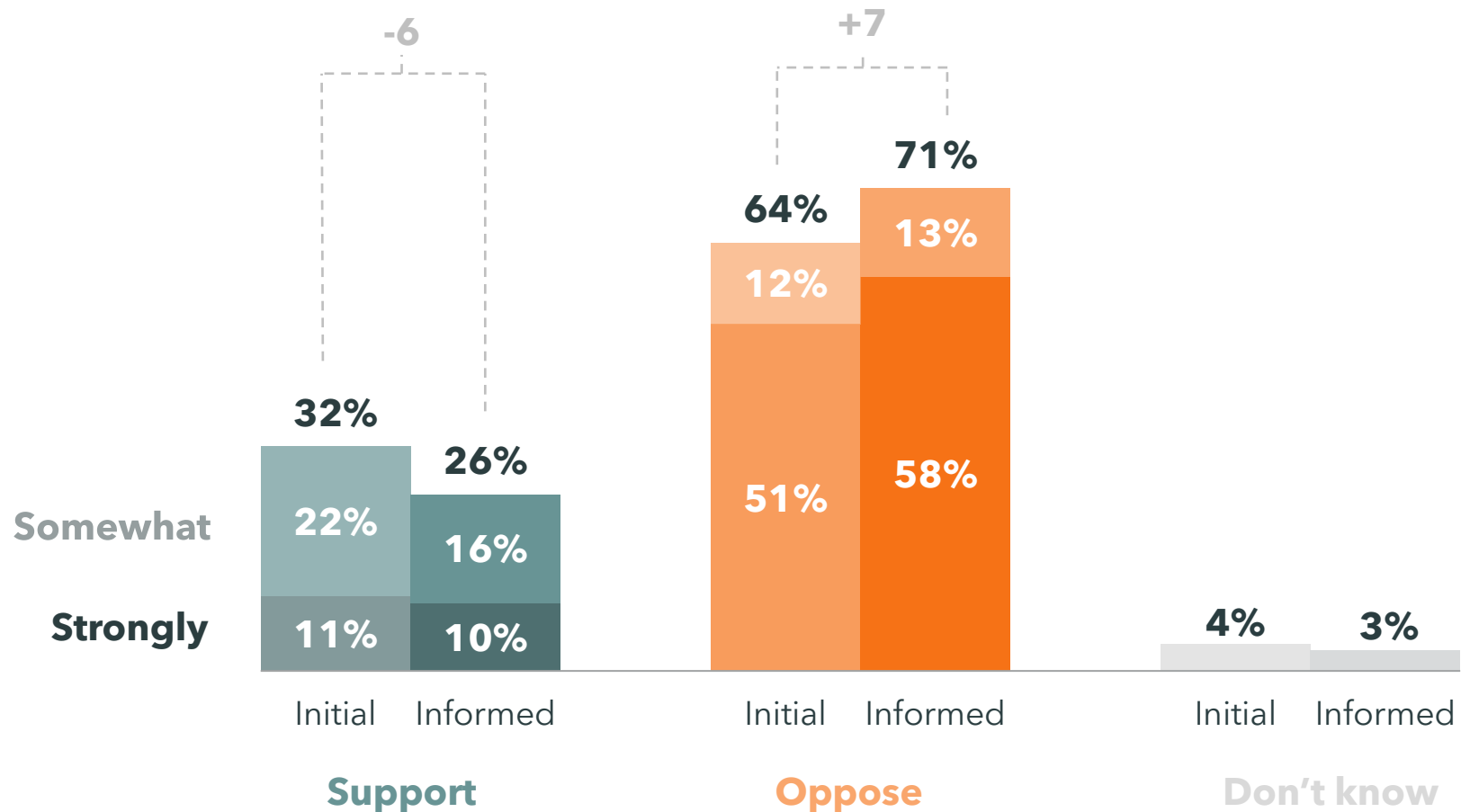
Second Tolling Proposal Test



Opposition for the RMPP increased by six-percentage points after voters read the statements both in support and opposition of tolling.



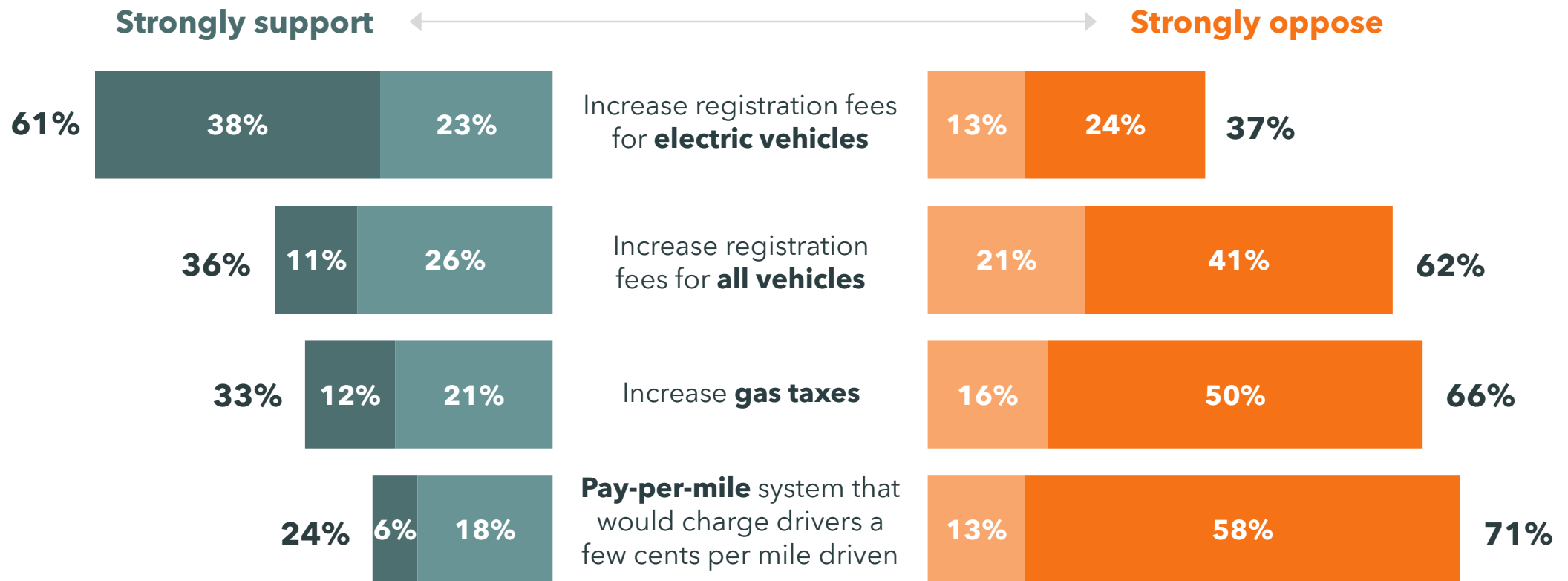
Additionally, there was a seven-percentage point increase in opposition to the Abernethy Bridge Toll after reading both sets of statements regarding tolling.



Tolling Alternatives



Over half of voters support increasing registration fees for electric vehicles, but they generally oppose alternatives to tolling that would impact all drivers.





John Horvick

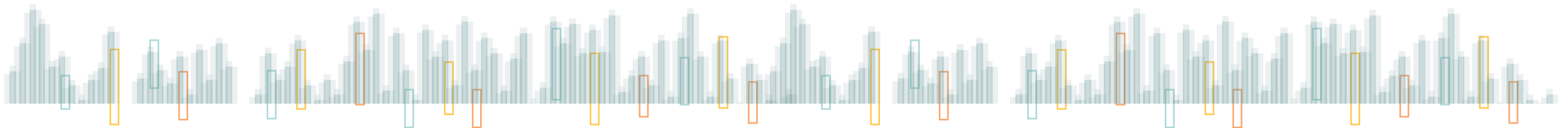
jhorvick@dhmresearch.com

Kara Krnacik

kkrnacik@dhmresearch.com

Lane Cooper

lcooper@dhmresearch.com





TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

March 11, 2024

Julie Brown, Chair
Oregon Transportation Commission
355 Capitol Street NE, MS 11
Salem, OR 97301

Lee Beyer, Vice Chair
Oregon Transportation Commission
355 Capitol Street NE, MS 11
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Brown and Vice Chair Beyer,

Thank you for all your work to evaluate congestion pricing and project-based tolling in the Portland Metro Region. I appreciate your willingness to lean into difficult conversations, ask hard questions, and reevaluate our course of action when the time arises. Now is one of those times.

The state's path towards implementing tolling in the Portland metro area is uncertain, at best. After years of work, the challenges of implementing the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) have grown larger than the anticipated benefits. Therefore, I believe it is time to bring the agency's work on the RMPP to an end and delay additional expenditures for implementation of tolling on I-205 to the future when the legislature can further evaluate and provide clearer direction on tolling. Taking this action today will allow the state to focus its limited resources on high priority needs and provide an opportunity for meaningful legislative conversations about alternative revenue sources in the 2025 legislative session.

Any delay to building tolling infrastructure in Oregon must not impact the collection of toll revenues for the Interstate Bridge Replacement project (IBR). ODOT and the Commission shall work with our partners in Washington to develop a transition plan to utilize the Washington State Department of Transportation's tolling infrastructure for IBR to keep this important project on track.

In 2023, at the urging of local jurisdictions and elected officials, I asked you to delay toll collection until 2026 so that ODOT could develop an updated finance plan for the Urban Mobility Strategy and a comprehensive report on the agency's work on equity impacts of tolling and traffic mitigation. A primary goal of the finance plan was to document the costs of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement and the I-205 Improvements projects and daylight the extent to which tolling revenues were assumed in their financing. The finance plan made clear that rising project costs and uncertainty around future toll revenues meant that the state did not have all the funding needed to proceed with the full strategy as originally envisioned. The finance plan also included costs associated with advancing the RMPP and the tolling program overall.

The purpose of the equity and mitigation report was to comprehensively document what steps had and had not been taken and to respond to ongoing concerns raised by Portland metro area legislators, local elected officials, and the public about traffic diversion and revenue sharing. The report was transparent, comprehensive, and reflected the state's commitment to extensive community engagement over many years. The report also highlighted that a toll program which keeps toll rates low enough for working families and raises enough funding for major projects would fail to meet expectations for local project funding and revenue sharing.

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Chair Brown and Vice Chair Beyer, Oregon Transportation Commission
March 11, 2024
Page 2

Our state has a dire need to diversify and grow transportation resources. As you know, ODOT faces catastrophic funding challenges which must be tackled head on in the 2025 legislative session. I support the OTC and the legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation's ongoing work to address the state's transportation needs and look forward to working in partnership with you to secure stable and reliable funding.

The decision to stop the work on the RMPP, and pause development of Oregon's toll collection program, is not one I come to lightly. I fully appreciate that canceling and delaying alternative funding tools will only make our challenges greater in the near term, but I am confident that a more robust conversation on funding options will yield greater understanding and direction for our future moving forward.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Kotek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tina" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Kotek".

Governor Tina Kotek

cc: Oregon Department of Transportation Director Kris Strickler

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COMMUTING

Gov. Tina Kotek shelves plans for I-5, I-205 tolls in Portland area

Updated: Mar. 13, 2024, 12:11 p.m. | Published: Mar. 11, 2024, 3:50 p.m.



A bridge carries I-205 over the Tualatin River near West Linn, OR, seen from the air on Wed., Feb. 8, 2023. Dave Killen / The Oregonian



By Jayati Ramakrishnan | The Oregonian/OregonLive

Gov. Tina Kotek on Monday announced her intention to halt plans to toll Portland-area freeways, citing uncertainty about the costs of planned freeway projects and the revenue tolling would bring in.

In a letter to the Oregon Transportation Commission, which sets state transportation policy, Kotek said she believed it was time to end the work on the Regional Mobility Pricing Project, the state transportation department's plan to impose per-mile tolls on interstates 5 and 205 from Wilsonville to Portland's northern border.

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"The state's path toward implementing tolling is uncertain at best," Kotek wrote in her letter to commissioners. "After years of work, the challenges of implementing the Regional Mobility Pricing Plan (RMPP) have grown larger than the anticipated benefits."

The Oregon Department of Transportation has sought to toll the two freeways as a way to reduce congestion, but also to generate funding for new freeway projects. The plan has been met with fierce opposition from most sides, including residents in communities along I-205 that would likely see increased traffic from drivers trying to avoid tolls, and from environmental advocates who feel that proposed tolling costs are unnecessarily high and would fund freeway-widening projects.

Following Kotek's announcement, Metro Council President Lynn Peterson said she was relieved to set aside the "regional conflict" over tolling.

“Now it’s time to come up with new, common-sense ideas for transportation funding that address our modern needs and meet our state and regional climate goals,” Peterson said in a statement.

In written statements, Oregon Transportation Commission Chair Julie Brown and Vice Chair Lee Beyer both said they still view tolling as an important element of state transportation policy.

Beyer, who was a state senator until last year, said he had supported tolling when he was in the Legislature, and that hasn’t changed.

“I remain strongly supportive of tolling as one piece of a modern, stable and resilient funding structure,” Beyer wrote. “However, metro leadership views on tolling have changed. Local and regional opposition to tolling makes clear that Oregon is not ready for regional tolling. I respect that change.”

Transportation department Director Kris Strickler said the state’s transportation system is vital to Oregon’s overall health and that tolling could have been a “critical” tool to address some of its needs.

“Despite years of work with local and regional elected officials, community leaders and members of the public, it is clear the toll program cannot be designed in a way that meets the needs expressed by our local partners while also meeting the needs of Oregonians statewide,” Strickler in a written statement. “I look forward to working with partners, communities across the state and the Legislature to identify resilient funding solutions to maintaining a safe, accessible and sustainable system.”

Kotek last year [ordered a pause on toll collections until 2026](#) so that state transportation department could present a finance plan and more thorough report on the impact tolling would have on low-income and minority communities.

In her Monday letter to the commission, she said those findings made clear that tolling is not viable at the moment.

“The finance plan made clear that rising project costs and uncertainty around future toll revenues meant that the state did not have all the funding needed to proceed with the full strategy as originally envisioned,” Kotek wrote.

She added that the agency’s study of a low-income toll program showed that a program that kept toll rates low enough for working families, while still raising enough funds to support new projects, would “fail to meet expectations for local project funding and revenue sharing.”

The commission had previously approved a plan to decrease tolls for low-income drivers – Oregon and Washington residents who earned up to 200% of the federal poverty level would receive at least a 50% discount on tolls.

Kotek said her decision would not affect plans to toll a replacement Interstate Bridge and said state transportation officials should continue to work with Washington officials to keep that plan on track. Officials from both states are currently seeking funding to rebuild the Interstate 5 bridge over the Columbia River.

Tolling was also planned on the Abernethy Bridge on I-205, but that has now been pushed back until at least after the 2025 session.

“To be ready for legislative direction in either way, we are slowing our spending on designing the Abernethy Bridge toll, and trying to identify if we can get the project to a good milestone and then pause work,” said Kevin Glenn, an ODOT spokesperson, in an email.

The state transportation department faces an ongoing budget crisis: The agency is staring down a \$680 million deficit in the next five years, largely due to rising costs and slower-than-anticipated revenue from gas taxes.

Kotek said the state must tackle those “catastrophic” funding challenges during the 2025 legislative session, when she said lawmakers also can “provide clearer direction on tolling.”

– [Jayati Ramakrishnan](#) reports on Oregonians’ access to housing, transportation and mental health care. Reach her at jramakrishnan@oregonian.com.

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