



# Alamo Regional Mobility Authority

143 Billy Mitchell Blvd, Ste 6 ♦ San Antonio, TX 78226  
(210) 362-7831 ♦ (210) 362-7807 Fax  
[www.AlamorMA.org](http://www.AlamorMA.org)

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Contact:  
Tom Griebel, 362-7831

## ALAMO REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY RELEASES RESULTS OF TOLL LANE AWARENESS STUDY

*Survey finds that a majority of people like the details of the toll plan for Bexar County*

(SAN ANTONIO) – In 2004, with input from representatives across the county, the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) identified an **\$8 billion shortfall in highway funding** for Bexar County's growing traffic needs, and determined that a **system of user-pay toll lanes is the only funding mechanism** that will get new lanes built along the county's most congested corridors within the next five years. Without toll lanes, the **citizens of this region face waiting another 20 years or paying significantly more in gasoline taxes** to get much needed added lane capacity. To address the shortfall, and avoid transportation gridlock, **the MPO formally included toll lanes as a part of the county's 25-year transportation plan**, and the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority (Alamo RMA) was created as the local entity to implement this plan.

Although toll lanes are a part of the county's future, many citizens have little or no experience with how tolls work in general, and specifically how they will work in Bexar County. More importantly, they don't presently understand the need for tolls.

As the local entity charged with implementing the toll lanes plan, part of the Alamo RMA's responsibility also is to help citizens understand the plan. But what exactly do citizens want to know about the toll lane plan?

To help the RMA identify these information needs, Baselice & Associates, Inc. was commissioned to conduct research on the public's current understanding of the toll lane plan. The findings will help the Alamo RMA design an education effort about the local toll system, its purpose and benefits, as well as the schedule for implementation.

***Survey concludes that the more citizens understand how the toll lanes will work, the more likely they are to back the plan***

The survey results indicate an initial lack of understanding among citizens about the toll lanes planned for Bexar County. But most significantly, the survey also found that when citizens are presented

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basic information about why toll lanes are needed, along with details about how the system will work, many express support. Through the survey, the Alamo RMA learned that:

- An overwhelming majority of citizens surveyed think traffic congestion in Bexar County is a problem. Fifty six percent (56%) think it's a major problem, while 38 % think it's a minor problem. Only 4% consider traffic no problem at all.
- When asked the best way to pay for new highway construction, more citizens choose building toll lanes (27%) over increasing vehicle registration fees (21%) or the sales tax (16%), or raising the gasoline tax (6%).
- In general, when citizens are given the details of how Bexar County's system of toll lanes will work, a majority of people (58%) express support.
- When citizens who live in the affected areas are given the details of the planned system of toll lanes, an even greater majority (62%) express support.

The survey also showed that the details which citizens found most compelling are the following:

- **Drivers will always have the choice** whether or not they will use the toll lanes and only actual users of the lanes will pay tolls.
- **The toll plan will accelerate needed construction** of additional lanes without increasing the tax burden on all residents.
- **The new toll lanes will help reduce traffic congestion** and result in less time spent in traffic.
- **There will be no toll booths** in our local system as the new toll lanes will use advanced technology that electronically scans vehicles as they enter and exit the toll lane, preventing a back up of traffic.

This survey was conducted among N=400 randomly selected voters countywide, with an additional n=100 interviews conducted in northern Bexar County. The survey was conducted between September 12 and 14 of this year. The margin of error is  $\pm 4.9\%$  at the .95 test level.

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### **The Alamo Regional Mobility Authority**

*The purpose of the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority is to provide this area with an opportunity to significantly accelerate needed transportation projects and have a local entity in place that will make its own mobility decisions for the community, while enhancing the economic vitality and quality of life for the residents in the San Antonio metropolitan area. The Alamo RMA will work in conjunction with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the San Antonio - Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and other agencies to formulate a strategy to implement a toll network that will generate and direct revenue to other long-awaited mobility projects that will improve the over-all transportation system.*