

## 65% of Torontonians say no to road tolls; 72% want bike lanes

June 03, 2011

David Rider

Torontonians strongly oppose using road tolls to pay for Mayor Rob Ford's planned — but unfunded — Sheppard subway line, says a new poll.

Forum Research's automated telephone survey of 1,050 Torontonians conducted Wednesday found, however, strong support for Ford's soon-to-be-released plan to put physically separated bike lanes on some downtown streets.

On tolls, the idea of charging drivers on main thoroughfares remains a non-starter with the public, said Forum president Lorne Bozinoff.

Some 65 per cent of respondents said they don't support tolls to pay for the Sheppard line. When rephrased as road tolls to reduce traffic congestion, the support was only slightly higher, at 43 per cent.

Gordon Chong, picked by Ford to figure out how to finance the \$4 billion Sheppard line, [has said](#) it will likely take road tolls, congestion charges and other revenue tools, as well as massive private investment, to get the subway built.

Ford himself remains adamantly opposed to tolls, his brother, Councillor Doug Ford, has said.

Separated bike lanes, on the other hand, garnered a whopping 72 per cent support.

This month, [Ford's bike plan](#) is to be unveiled, proposing separated lanes on Sherbourne, Wellesley, Harbord, Beverly, John and Richmond streets.

The poll also found strong opposition to the idea of reducing the size of the Toronto police service. Some 57 per cent oppose cutting the number of officers to help freeze property taxes.

This week, the police services board [asked Chief Bill Blair](#) to investigate the safety impact and possible savings of reducing the force by 500 officers.

Ford's appointee to the board, Councillor Michael Thompson, raised the idea, saying all options must be examined as Toronto faces a \$780 million operating budget shortfall for 2012.

Asked if Ford is doing a good job as mayor, six months after his upset victory, 57 per cent agreed, down from 60 per cent in a late-February Forum Research poll. An early-May Toronto Real Estate Board survey pegged Ford's support at 70 per cent.

As a whole, the new results aren't great news for Ford, said Bozinoff, who said he did the poll independently to gauge opinions on civic issues.

"Ford's support appears to have plateaued and these trial balloons being floated on how to solve financial problems, like road tolls and cutting the number of police, have no real support," he said.

The poll also found support for Toronto's mandatory 5 cent fee for plastic shopping bags is about even, at 52 per cent in favour, while a majority of Torontonians (54 per cent) continue to support the privatization of garbage collection for parts of the city.

The poll's margin of error is 3.1 per cent, 19 times out of 20.