The New York congestion charge*

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*The original design of this study dates of 2023, with the details being finalized ahead of the scheduled launch of the New York congestion charge in June 2024. The pause of the congestion charge meant that we paid for scripting charges but could hold off the survey administration. The project was revived following Governor Hochul's decision in November 2024 to unpause the congestion charge. The project's code name on OSF is Beliefs and Information in Gotham – Assessing the Popularity of Pricing through Learning via Experience (BIG APPLE). We thank Simon Goetze and Arthur Vu for excellent research assistance.

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Abstract

Traffic congestion is one of the most important issues in cities, where most people live. But congestion charges are rarely implemented – mostly because ex-ante unpopular. This paper examines the New York congestion charge. It focuses on policy evaluation and the causal analysis of public support. Policy evaluation relies on both administrative data and unique survey data. We also examine the extent to which information about and direct experience with congestion pricing are substitutes or complements. This version focuses on the 12,000-respondent baseline survey. It shows that congestion pricing is unpopular where is unknown – but information provision can improve perceptions and public support.

1 Introduction

Many policies that experts recommend are not implemented by policymakers, because of their (ex-ante) popularity. Congestion charges are a case in point. Congestion and local air pollution from road traffic are among the most important issues in many cities around the world. Driving and congestion create an important externality, i.e. an external cost to society, due to extended journeys, noise, accidents, and local air pollution. Yet only a handful of cities in the world have congestion charges. That is, there are way fewer cities that have a congestion charge than, say, jurisdictions pricing carbon. Not much has changed since the 1960s, when William S. Vickrey made the following statement: "in no other major area are pricing practices so irrational, so out of date, and so conducive to waste as in urban transportation" (Vickrey 1963, p. 452).

In 2025, a new congestion charge was implemented, in New York. In this paper, we combine policy evaluation and the causal analysis of public support (Carattini et al. 2024b) applied to the New York congestion charge to inform policymakers about two key items: how the congestion charge works (policy evaluation) and how voters learn about how it works.

With policy evaluation, we contribute to a relatively limited strand of research that examines the impact of congestion charges on key outcomes such as congestion, accidents, local air pollution, and housing values (Gibson and Carnovale 2015; Green et al. 2016, 2020; Tang and van Ommeren 2020; Tang 2021; see also Leape 2006 for a descriptive analysis applied to London). In line with the existing literature, we use administrative data for policy evaluation purposes. However, we also use survey data, which give us much more granular information on a variety of possible margins of adjustment in commuting behavior and impacts on travel satisfaction following the implementation of the congestion charge. Hence, our paper allows us to provide extensive

evidence on the functioning of the New York congestion charge, a policy that affects the largest metropolitan area in the United States and one of the largest cities in the world.

With the causal analysis of public support, we provide evidence on how beliefs about and public support for congestion charges may evolve with direct experience of the policy, thus contributing to existing evidence on belief revision following experience with Pigouvian taxes, including causal evidence in the field (Carattini et al. 2018), anecdotal evidence from before-after studies (Schuitema et al. 2010; Andersson and Nässén 2016), and causal evidence from the lab (Cherry et al. 2014; Dal Bó et al. 2018; Janusch et al. 2021).

This paper also tests the extent to which information about a policy may be a substitute for experience with it. Following evidence showing belief revision with experience, several studies on environmental taxes have provided information to respondents, as a potential substitute for experience, on how such taxes would work, aiming at addressing potential biased beliefs (in particular overly pessimistic beliefs). This strand of research, starting with Carattini et al. (2017) and including, among others, Dechezleprêtre et al. (2022), shows promise for the potential of informational treatments to contribute to addressing belief revision, including across countries and cultures. An informational treatment was also used in Dal Bó et al. (2018) and in research specific to congestion charges (Baranzini et al. 2021 and subsequently Arlinghaus et al. 2024). Informational treatments have also been used to try to address biased beliefs about other policies or social issues (see Haaland et al. 2023 for a non-exhaustive review).

However, information may also be a complement to experience, to the extent that the effects of a policy are not entirely salient to voters (with respect to the counterfactual). Hence, in this paper, we also examine the extent to which information (provided at

baseline) may be a complement to experience.

The survey covers respondents in the New York metropolitan area, respondents in four other metropolitan areas in the United States which currently do not have a congestion charge and have no immediate plans to introduce one, as well as in Greater London and in Singapore, which both already have a congestion charge and so where voters' beliefs about congestion charges may be less affected by New York's experience with congestion charges. That is, the survey covers New York, untreated control metropolitan areas, and already-treated control metropolitan areas, for a total of about 12,000 respondents in the first wave. Here, treatment refers to experiencing congestion pricing. New York starts as untreated and becomes treated between the first and second wave of the survey.

To test the role of substitutability or complementarity of information with respect to experience, the baseline survey includes a randomized informational treatment, which describes the experience of frontrunner cities with congestion charges.

In detail, the experimental design is as follows. Respondents are surveyed twice through two survey waves, to form a survey panel. At baseline, between December 2024 and early January 2025, half of the respondents in all metropolitan areas were exposed to the informational treatment, at random. Between waves, respondents in New York's metropolitan area are exposed to the New York congestion charge, starting from January 5, 2025. Hence, part of the sample is exposed to information only, part of the sample to experience only, part of the sample to both information and experience, and part of the sample to neither.

We shortly report here two sets of results, which are going to be augmented by many more findings as per pre-analysis plan. First, current results from the policy evaluation exercise using administrative data, focusing on very short-term effects as the congestion

charge has been in place only for a few days at the time of writing. Compared to our control group, when using administrative data, composed of Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., we observe a decrease in traffic in New York, one of the many outcomes that we track as per pre-analysis plan.

Second, we report on the effect of the informational treatment on baseline public support. Across all metropolitan areas, being exposed to the informational treatment increases support for congestion pricing in one's metropolitan area by about 8 percentage points. This effect is precisely estimated, given the sample size. Notably, the effect of the informational treatment is stronger (about 9.5 percentage points) across metropolitan areas in the United States than in Greater London and Singapore (about 3.5 percentage points), where respondents have already experienced congestion pricing. Note that support in the metropolitan areas that have already experienced the policy (measured for those respondents who were not exposed to the informational treatment) is at about 54%, whereas in metropolitan areas without a congestion charge at the time of the baseline survey support is at 30%. Yet, even in London and Singapore information provision still improves public support, pointing to the importance of ex-post communication strategies, complementing experience with information provision.

With this paper, we contribute to several strands of literature. First, we contribute to a strand of research evaluating, ex post congestion charges (Gibson and Carnovale 2015; Green et al. 2016, 2020; Tang and van Ommeren 2020; Tang 2021; see also Leape 2006 for a descriptive analysis applied to London), but also theoretical work on congestion pricing (Vickrey 1963; Arnott et al. 1993; Small et al. 2005; see also Parry 2009 for a review), including with an angle on political economy (De Borger and Proost 2012), as well as empirical analyses on congestion pricing from other contexts (e.g. Yang

et al. 2020; Bento et al. 2024; Kreindler 2024). Second, we add to work on people's understanding of and support for economic policies focused on experience (Schuitema et al. 2010; Cherry et al. 2014; Carattini et al. 2018; Dal Bó et al. 2018; Andersson and Nässén 2016), information provision in the context of congestion charges (Baranzini et al. 2021; Arlinghaus et al. 2024), and information provision in the context of people's understanding of and support for economic policies at large (e.g. Carattini et al. 2017; Stantcheva 2021; Dechezleprêtre et al. 2022; Alesina et al. 2023; Carattini et al. 2024a; Haaland and Roth 2023).

The remainder of this document is organized as follows. Section 2 provides details about the local context and economic rationale for our study, in particular concerning the causal analysis of public support and the informational treatment. Section 3 describes the experimental design and empirical approaches and corresponding data. Section 5 concludes.

2 Background

2.1 Local context

Congestion and local air pollution from road traffic are among the most important issues in many cities around the world. Driving and congestion create an important externality, i.e. an external cost to society, due to extended journeys, noise, accidents, and local air pollution, also coupled with greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. Small et al. 2005; Small and Verhoef 2007; Li 2012; Jacobsen 2013). The United Nations (2018) predicts huge increases in the absolute number and fraction of the world population living in cities, in developed and developing countries alike. According to the OECD

(OECD 2017), total motorized mobility may increase by about 40% (90%) by 2030 (2050) with respect to 2015. Whether higher urban population translates into higher traffic congestion depends on public policy. Congestion is a textbook example of a negative externality. Pigou (1920) already called for corrective taxes, now known as "Pigouvian," to address negative externalities. In the 1960s, several seminal studies provided guidelines on how to precisely internalize the externality of driving: pricing road traffic, for instance through congestion charges (e.g. Vickrey 1963).

Economists often complain that while the adoption of carbon pricing is steadily picking up (World Bank 2024), adoption is still too slow to tackle the climate externality. However, still according to the World Bank (World Bank 2024), some 70 jurisdictions around the world price carbon at the moment. Unlike the climate externality, traffic congestion is a very local issue, with immediate harms. Yet only a handful of cities in the world have congestion charges. That is, there are way fewer cities that have a congestion charge than jurisdictions pricing carbon. In the context of traffic congestion not much has changed since the 1960s, when William S. Vickrey stated that "in no other major area are pricing practices so irrational, so out of date, and so conducive to waste as in urban transportation" (Vickrey 1963, p. 452).

Lukewarm public support is likely the main reason for the very limited adoption of congestion charges around the world (Gu et al. 2018). Congestion charges were rejected in the United Kingdom, in Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Manchester. They were also rejected in the Swedish city of Gothenburg, although in a non-binding referendum. Voters in another Swedish city, Stockholm, voted in favor of the congestion charge, but only after a trial period, which we know substantially reduced local air pollution (Simeonova et al. 2019). Policymakers in New York also considered congestion charges in the past, before giving up. Early plans date from the first decades of the 20$^{\text{th}}$

century, while a 2006 proposal by former mayor Bloomberg was eventually abandoned at the state level, for lack of public support. More recently, however, the proposal was revived. After another failed attempt at introducing legislation implementing a congestion charge in 2015, a new proposal dating of 2017 from former state governor Cuomo evolved over time until it was passed by the state legislature, as part of the state budget, in 2019. The proposal implied that the entire island of Manhattan south of 60^{th} street would be charged, with a few notable exceptions circumventing the city center: the Franklin D. Roosevelt East River Drive, the West Side Highway, and the Battery Park Underpass. The policy was to be implemented as a cordon charge, with cameras at each entry to the inner zone (but not inside the zone capturing movements within the island). Vehicles were expected to be tolled once per day only. Exemptions applied for emergency vehicles and vehicles transporting passengers with disabilities. The charge level was expected to be between $9 and $23 during peak hours, higher if not paying through E-ZPass. Revenues were expected to be used mostly to fund public transportation. Tax deductions for low- and moderate-income households were also foreseen. The congestion charge was expected to be launched on June 30, 2024, before Governor Hochul called it off in early June 2024. Governor Hochul did not abandon the policy completely, but froze it for an undetermined period.

In November 2024, the policy was unpaused. The policy design remained largely unchanged except for one major difference. The congestion charge was revised with a new price of $9 for entering the zone, known as the "Congestion Relief Zone". The congestion charge is expected to reach gradually the previous target of $15 towards the end of the decade. Prices were adjusted downward also for ride-hailing companies. The reference price is for drivers using the electronic toll system E-ZPass. 110 toll readers are present in the city for processing the congestion charge. The congestion charge entered into force on January 5, 2025.

2.2 Economic rationale

The project builds on the following premises. Limited information and biased beliefs among citizens are among the reasons for the insufficient adoption of ambitious environmental policies and may be hampering the adoption of other policies as well (see Haaland et al. 2023). While the early literature on public support for environmental taxes did not really question people's responses, even concluding, as done in Steg et al. (2006), that subsidies encouraging the adoption of specific behaviors would be more effective than environmental taxes because people perceive them as such, the second generation of studies started highlighting important information asymmetries between economists and citizens. Knowledge gaps and biased beliefs became evident when scholars started looking at how experience of a given Pigouvian policy changed people's perceptions, and in turn public support. Studies initially provided anecdotal evidence, for instance from the Swedish cities of Stockholm (Schuitema et al. 2010) and Gothenburg (Andersson and Nässén 2016), which both implemented congestion charges after a trial period. More systematic analyses followed shortly after, providing what is now called the causal analysis of public support (Carattini et al. 2024b). Using data for 2012 and 2013, Carattini et al. (2018) built a panel to measure how perceptions about and public support for pricing garbage by the bag may vary before and after the policy's implementation, compared to an already-treated control group, while also providing a policy evaluation exercise. Support increases substantially with experience, while no difference is observed in the already-treated control group, which was already familiar with the policy. Experience has also been shown to increase public support for Pigouvian taxes in lab experiments (Cherry et al. 2014; Dal Bó et al. 2018; Janusch et al. 2021).

If experience can lead to belief revision, it may follow naturally that trial periods

should be used more often, as advocated in Carattini et al. (2018). However, trial periods also need some degree of public support. Further, they may work better for policies whose effects are very salient and where the short-term and long-term price elasticities of demand do not vary substantially. Hence, a natural extension to this literature was to test whether information provision could be a substitute, even if imperfect, for experience. Carattini et al. (2017) analyzed with survey data the drivers of and barriers to public support for a carbon tax submitted to Swiss citizens in 2015. Misperceptions played an important role in its rejection. Public support would have been higher if revenues were earmarked for environmental purposes, because this is how many people think an environmental tax can be effective. At the same time of the ballot, a discrete choice experiment was administered to another sample of voters. Voters were informed about economic, distributional, and environmental effects of different carbon tax designs, simulated with a computable general equilibrium model. Since then, many additional studies have provided information to survey respondents and lab participants, in a randomized fashion. However, we still do not know to what extent information and experience may be substitutes and (or) complements. Hence, the proposed research aims to shed substantial new light on belief revision following real-world experience, advancing the frontier in the literature.

This research project examines the implementation of the New York congestion charge, measuring belief revision about the policy in New York versus a group of control cities. It also measures behavioral change, thus combining analysis of public support with policy evaluation.

3 Design and data

3.1 Design

The core of this study is a representative survey panel, aimed at examining beliefs and public support, but also conceived for policy evaluation purposes. Respondents are recruited in the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) to which New York City belongs, including individuals living inside and outside the area under the congestion charge, as well as in the other top metropolitan statistical areas in the country (Boston–Cambridge–Newton, Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington, and Washington–Arlington–Alexandria), serving as an untreated control group, and in Greater London, United Kingdom, and the city-state of Singapore, both providing an already-treated control group. We do not expect beliefs about congestion charges to change much in London or Singapore following the implementation of the congestion charge in New York, but they may vary in the United States, a feature that this design would allow us to document.

This design leverages the fact that respondents in and around New York City will directly experience the congestion charge, with the other MSAs serving as control units. The survey panel is obtained with two survey waves, about six months apart. Each wave has largely the same survey instrument, to measure variation within subjects on the same outcomes. At the same time, we are interested in the role of information. Hence, at baseline, half of the respondents in each MSA, including New York City, are exposed to an informational treatment about congestion charges, a feature that allows us to examine how good of a substitute and (or) complement information is to experience. To examine substitutability, we compare baseline beliefs under information provision in control cities and ex-post beliefs in New York City. To examine complemen-

tarity, we analyze ex-post beliefs in New York City for the respondents subject to the informational treatment against (i) baseline (and ex-post) beliefs in control cities, for respondents exposed to the information treatment (information only), and (ii) ex-post beliefs in New York City for respondents not exposed to the informational treatment (experience only).

The informational treatment to which half of the respondents across geographies are exposed details the effects of congestion charge policies implemented in the past and the costs of congestion. This informational treatment will be displayed to treated subjects before eliciting their support for congestion charges. The intervention reads as follows (based on Green et al. 2016; Green et al. 2020, Traffic Mobility Review Board 2023; Transport for London 2023):

> *A congestion charge is a fee charged on cars and motor vehicles being driven within central parts of a city during busy hours. After implementing congestion charges, London, Milan, Singapore, and Stockholm each experienced 20-30% reductions in road traffic. As a result, driving time required to reach a destination in the central business district fell substantially, air quality improved, and the number of accidents fell. Many commuters shifted from driving to the use of public transportation. In large cities, excess congestion is estimated to cost businesses, commuters, and residents substantial amounts of money. For example, in New York excess congestion is estimated to cost $20 billion a year.*

The control group is instead exposed to the following text:

> *A congestion charge is a fee charged on cars and motor vehicles being driven within central parts of a city during busy hours.*

Further, given also some expected attrition, which the marketing company can minimize but cannot completely avoid, a pool of new respondents is added during the second wave, to detect potential experimenter demand effects in the panel. Absent experimenter demand effects, ex-post answers in the panel should be comparable with ex-post answers in the new pool of respondents.

Policy evaluation is conducted using survey data as well, comparing respondents in and around New York City with control MSAs. Our design and sample size are such that potential influence, if any, between the informational treatment and survey responses about commuting patterns would not interfere with the policy evaluation exercise, as robustness tests can be run with respondents not exposed to information. Further, policy evaluation using survey data is complemented with administrative data (traffic counts, pollution from monitoring stations and satellite data, severe traffic accidents). Survey data can augment administrative data by measuring behavioral change along the intensive and extensive margins as well as changes in utility (for instance due to reduced comfort from commuting via public transportation) that are not observed in administrative data.

The survey aims to be representative of all the MSAs that are sampled, as well as of London and Singapore for the respective samples. The survey measures a wide variety of outcomes, including understanding, perceptions, narratives, and mental models related with congestion charges as well as many items related with commuting behaviors for policy evaluation purposes. The following section provides more details.

3.2 Data

Our data primarily consist of surveys conducted in December 2024 to early January 2025, before the policy introduction on January 5, 2025, and in June of 2025, about

six months after the policy introduction. Six months is a period of time that gives respondents in New York City enough time to experience the effects of the policy and is still within the time frame suggested by survey companies for a panel study (attrition becoming an increasing concern beyond six months).[1]

The samples for the initial survey includes about 4,000 respondents in the New York-Newark-Jersey City metropolitan statistical area (MSA), the region that is being treated with the congestion policy introduction; 1,000 to 1,125 respondents each in the Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., MSAs, which are control MSAs that have never been treated with a congestion charge; and about 1,500 and 2,000 respondents each in Singapore and Greater London, respectively, which are control cities that were already treated in the past with congestion pricing. Sample sizes were generally determined by the size of the panel of potential respondents available to the survey company with which we collaborate for a given location, with such availability being a key criterion in the choice of the survey company. The baseline survey was interrupted, by design, when January 5, 2025, started in New York (and elsewhere on Eastern Standard Time), meaning that in some metropolitan areas the total number of observations does not correspond exactly to our quota, but in all cases is very close. We discuss the role of partial responses in what follows.

Respondents are compensated a fixed amount for participation and at the time of the baseline survey were made aware of strong financial incentives to respond to the second survey wave in mid-2025. The second survey will consist of both respondents who participated in the first wave, as well as new respondents, to maintain sample size

[1]Given some expected attrition, the marketing company company will obtain new respondents in the second wave of the survey in order to balance sample sizes across the waves. Having a mix of new respondents and original respondents will have the added benefit, as mentioned, of allowing us to test for experimenter demand effects that could result from surveying repeat respondents twice. That is, we can test whether the responses of the newly added respondents is meaningfully different from the responses of repeat respondents.

constant. Sample sizes and proportions will be approximately identical between waves. Respondents are being recruited by marketing research firm Bilendi, which also hosts the survey and collects responses. Bilendi is instructed to recruit respondents with the goal of achieving sample representativeness for each metropolitan area on population measures of age and gender. Attrition rates are expected around 50%, with some variation across markets. Appendix Section **??** compares our samples with their corresponding underlying population. Appendix Section **??** also compares socioeconomic characteristics between treatment and control groups for the informational treatment (balance of covariates).

To maintain a desired quality level, respondents are automatically removed from the study for completing the survey in less than six minutes, for failing to have properly read the questions, or for failing to pass simple attention checks that are included in the survey instrument. As detailed in the survey instrument, respondents are asked standard demographic questions; open response questions concerning opinions about traffic and congestion; questions concerning their current commuting and transportation habits (including detailed trip information); their satisfaction with their transportation habits and options; open response questions concerning their knowledge about congestion charges and narratives about how they work; support for such congestion charges and their perception of the effects on them (including forecasts of the impact of the policy on their own choices) as well as on their metropolitan area (including distributional and competitiveness effects). While respondents encounter all the questions, certain details of the question are tailored to the policies and conditions unique to the various geographies included in the sample. A few follow-up questions depend on the answer provided in the previous questions. For the baseline survey, the average (median) completion time was 21 minutes (16 minutes).

The survey provides us with measures such as support for the congestion charge policy and degree of confidence about that support or opposition; preferred level, in local currency, of the congestion charge; referred uses of the revenue generated from the congestion charge; preferred policy level conditional on the preferred use of revenues; degree of (perceived) knowledge about the policy; and second-order beliefs about preferences by eliciting beliefs about the percentage of one's metropolitan area that would support the policy. In addition to these general measures of policy support, we elicit a Likert rating concerning the policy's fairness and the specific policy impact forecast by the respondents on their own household's welfare and travel usage, as well as aggregate effects on commuting times, air pollution, economic activity, welfare of all people and of low-income people in one's city and in one's metropolitan area. All of these responses are as outcome variables to provide detail about the causal impact on support and the mechanisms underlying it.

For policy evaluation purposes, we combine data from our (panel) survey and administrative data from other sources (including other surveys). We aim to evaluate the impact of congestion pricing on outcomes related to travel speeds, travel behavior, locational choices, (severe) accidents, and local air pollution.

Power calculations for hypothesis tests are provided in Appendix Section **??**. Power calculations cover both policy evaluation and the causal analysis of public support.

4 Empirical results

4.1 Public support

Public support at baseline Absent any informational intervention, public support for congestion pricing across the metropolitan areas without experience of congestion pricing, i.e. all metropolitan areas in the United States, was 30.4 percent. In the Greater London, 47.9 percent of respondents supported congestion pricing, and in Singapore 57.7 percent. This difference in public support that emerges from our descriptive evidence is statistically significant.

We also measure respondents' perception of public support for the policy in their metropolitan area (second-order beliefs). Overall, we find at baseline very small differences between expected and actual public support, with differences at most in the order of 3%. This finding suggests that respondents have a good sense of public support in their metropolitan area.

Information Here we report on the effect of the informational treatment on baseline public support. Across all metropolitan areas, being exposed to the informational treatment increases support for congestion pricing in one's metropolitan area by about 8 percentage points, as shown in Table 1. This effect is precisely estimated, given the sample size. Notably, the effect of the informational treatment is stronger (about 9.5 percentage points) across metropolitan areas in the United States than in Greater London and Singapore (about 3.5 percentage points), where respondents have already experienced congestion pricing, and baseline support is higher. Yet, even in London and Singapore information provision still improves public support, pointing to the importance of ex-post communication strategies, complementing experience with information

provision.

Another way to measure policy support is to elicit the preferred policy size, as indicated in our survey by a respondent's congestion fee. In the metropolitan areas in the United States that have not yet experienced the policy, the informational treatment increases by \$0.80 the preferred level of a congestion charge (Table 2, column 3), and increases by \$0.61 the preferred level of the congestion charge when the revenue is allocated to a preferred use (column 4). Both effects are strongly significant,

The informational treatment has similar and uniformly positive effects toward policy perceptions. The informational treatment significantly improves perceptions of the policy's fairness (Table 2, column 1) and on whether the policy will have beneficial or harmful effects on one's household (column 2), each of which is measured using a five-scale Likert response.

Table 1: The Effect of Information on Support

	Dependent variable:					
	Probability of support					
	All	All	Without Experience (U.S.)	Without Experience (U.S.)	With Experience (Non U.S.)	With Experience (Non U.S.)
Info treatment	0.076***	0.078***	0.094***	0.095***	0.035*	0.036**
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Controls		X		X		X
Observations	9,666	9,666	6,740	6,740	2,926	2,926
R^2	0.006	0.076	0.010	0.047	0.001	0.049
Adjusted R^2	0.006	0.075	0.010	0.045	0.001	0.046
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Table 2: Effect of Information on Policy Perceptions

	Dependent variable:				
	Fairness	Effect on household	Level of fee	Level of fee if preferred use	Others' support
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Info treatment	0.185***	0.141***	0.800***	0.608***	2.790***
	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.127)	(0.103)	(0.450)
Controls	X	X	X	X	X
Observations	11,425	7,251	8,050	6,876	11,425
R^2	0.081	0.034	0.049	0.026	0.068
Adjusted R^2	0.080	0.032	0.047	0.024	0.067
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

5 Conclusions

Most people live in cities, and urbanization, as a trend, is expected to continue. The problems related to traffic congestion rank very high in cities. For economists, the solution to road traffic is relatively straightforward: pricing it. Yet, only a handful of congestion charges exist around the world, over thousands of cities. The main reason is lack of public support, as congestion charges tend to be unpopular, ex ante. But 2025 saw one addition to the list of cities pricing congestion: New York.

This paper studies the New York congestion charge, from two complementary perspectives: policy evaluation and the causal analysis of public support. The paper combines a unique survey measuring people's commuting behavior as well as beliefs about and public support for the congestion charge and administrative data. It also examines the extent to which information about and direct experience with congestion pricing are substitutes or complements.

This version focuses on the 12,000-respondent baseline survey. It shows that congestion pricing is unpopular where is unknown – but information provision can improve perceptions and public support.

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