

Prompt:

A city councilor in a medium-sized city is deciding whether to support or oppose a proposal that would combine a decrease in the city's sales tax with the transformation of a portion of a highway in the councilor's district into a toll road. Using the facts below, write an essay in which you argue for one option over the other based on the following two criteria:

- The councilor wants the district to be an attractive shopping destination for people coming in from the suburbs.
- The councilor wants the continued support of voters in the district.

Currently, the city's sale tax is slightly higher than that of the surrounding suburbs. The sales tax applies only to goods that are not deemed essential. Most of the goods bought by non-locals are subject to the tax. The highway is the most popular route into the city. Alternative routes generally run at a third of the speed, except during rush hour when the highway slows to a crawl. The stretch of highway targeted by the proposal lies entirely within the councilor's district.

Institution of the proposal is not expected to change the total revenue collected by the city. The sales tax would be decreased to slightly less than that of the surrounding suburbs. The stretch of high would be the first toll road in the metropolitan area. Polls show that the majority of residents in the councilor's district believe it would be unfair to have to pay a toll. In other cities, dissatisfaction with tolls has fallen after they have been imposed. Traffic is expected to move more quickly during rush hour if a toll is imposed.

Essay:

The recent proposal made in the city council has the ability to create an attractive shopping destination and decrease traffic congestion. By supporting this proposal the district councilor will help revitalize the area while increasing revenue for the businesses that have developed along the main highways exits. However, while there are some concerns that creating the first toll road in the city will burden locals residents and act as a deterrent to travelers, these concerns are unwarranted. In other cities where comparable toll roads were created the initial dissatisfaction dissipated.

Failure to adopt this proposed plan will continue the burdensome traffic congestion during rush hour and allow for businesses to stagnate economically. By decreasing the sales tax - on items primarily purchased by non-locals - the district will become much more competitive and foster a 'positive' jurisdiction shopping destination from suburban residents. Additionally this increase in revenue will trickle down to many people in this district who work in the area.

While fostering a competitive (and attractive) shopping destination is a major reason to support this proposal, it is not the sole justification. Another important aspect to consider is that the toll

road will encourage car-pooling during the work week thus decreasing the rush hour traffic and concurrently balance the cities revenue as it decreases the sales tax on non-essential products.

This idea comes off as unfair to many local residents - however as it has been shown in other cities where this has been implemented the familiarity fosters comfort and the toll becomes banal. For the benefit of this district and its constituents it would be wise to adopt this policy proposal. The alternative is to miss out on an opportunity to create great change and forever long for something that could've been. The councilors role is to represent the best interests of his or her constituency and by opposing this they would not be doing their job. This is not to insinuate that there will not be growing pains along the way - but this city should embrace change rather than fear it.