

Section 9:
External Stakeholder
Interviews Summary Report

2005 Customer Satisfaction Survey External Stakeholder Interviews

Summary Report

Conducted for
**The Tennessee
Department of Transportation**

by
ETC Institute
TransTech Management



October 31, 2005

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Overview

ETC Institute conducted one-on-one interviews with leaders of organizations outside the Department of Transportation who use transportation services or influence transportation decisions in the State of Tennessee. The interviews were conducted October 12-25, 2005.

The purpose of the external stakeholder interview was twofold. First, it was designed to help identify issues that should be addressed in the 2005 External Customer Survey. Second, it was designed to involve external customers in the survey development process to educate key customer groups about the Department's process for gathering customer input.

Some of the topics that were addressed during the interviews included the following:

- How stakeholders rate the State's transportation system
- How stakeholders think the quality of the State's transportation system is changing
- What stakeholders think TDOT does best
- How stakeholders think TDOT can improve
- Concerns about travel safety on State highways
- Concerns about construction and maintenance on State highways
- Types of information stakeholders would like to see TDOT provide.
- Perceived adequacy of funding for transportation in Tennessee
- Perceived challenges for transportation in Tennessee
- Suggested questions to include on the survey.

A total of 42 external stakeholders were interviewed. Those interviewed were all members of the Statewide Steering Committee for the Long-Range Plan. The interviews were conducted by phone. Most interviews took about 30-45 minutes to complete. The names and organizations of those interviewed are provided below.

- Mr. Dwight Murphy, Association of County Mayors
- Mr. Jeff Barrie, Citizens for TDOT Reform
- Mr. Dave Huneryager, Tennessee Trucking Association
- Mr. Jeff Welch, Tennessee Association of MPOs
- Mr. Bill Terry, AARP
- Mr. Brian Harris, Tennessee Association of Housing and Redevelopment
- Ms. Caty Butcher, Sierra Club – Tennessee State Chapter
- Mr. Keith Donaldson, Jackson MPO
- Mr. Terrence Bobrowski, East Tennessee Development District
- Mr. Jermaine Harper, Chattanooga African American Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Ray Douglas, Engineering

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- Ms. Rebecca Hitchcock, Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency
- Mr. Steve Copeland, Moring Public
- Mr. Tom Hopton, Tennessee Disability Coalition
- Ms. Jane Schnelle, Seniors, Inc.
- Mr. James Morinec, American Council of Engineering Companies
- Mr. Don Lindsey, AAA-East Tennessee
- Mr. Gary Tysinger, Johnson City MPO
- Mr. Jeff Hammond, Institute of Transportation Engineers – Tennessee Section
- Mr. Randy Richardson, Port of Memphis
- Mr. Monty Adams, Franklin County – Office of Mayor
- Mr. Steve Sondheim, Citizens for TDOT Reform
- Ms. Melissa Smith, Statewide Independent Living Council
- Mr. Phillip Pinion, State House
- Mr. Walt Baker, Tennessee Hotel and Lodging Association
- Mr. Bob Minter, Tennessee Aviation Association
- Mr. Thomas Dugan, Tennessee Public Transportation Association – Urban
- Ms. Deborah Woolley, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. David Brooks, Safety Engineering Consultants
- Ms. Marian Ott, Cumberland Region Tomorrow
- Mr. Al Mance, Tennessee Education Association
- Mr. Kent Starwalt, Tennessee Road Builders Association
- Mr. David Mainord, Upper Cumberland Development District
- Mr. Don Ridgeway, Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council
- Mr. Mike Philpot, West Tennessee Industrial Association
- Mr. Tom Vorholt, Ingram Barge
- Mr. Jim Cain, CSX Transportation
- Mr. Jim Deming, Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation
- Ms. Karen Hundt, American Planning Association – Tennessee Chapter
- Mr. Jeff Pfitzer, City of Chattanooga – Department of Public Works
- Ms. Susan Thrasher, Womens Transportation Seminar
- Mr. Don Chambers, LOJAC

This report contains a summary of the comments that were made by the stakeholders who were interviewed. The order that comments are listed does not reflect the priority that external stakeholders place on various issues. The report is designed to serve as an informational tool that will support the development of questions for the statewide customer survey that will be conducted during the Spring of 2006.

How External Stakeholders Rate the State’s Transportation System

Twenty-seven (27) of the external stakeholders interviewed rated the State’s Transportation system as “good” or “excellent.” Fifteen (15) rated the system as

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“average.” None (0) of the 42 stakeholders rated the system as “poor.” Some of the reasons that external stakeholders gave their ratings are provided below:

- Roads are very well maintained. The transportation system could be improved by improving traffic signal coordination, better traffic flow during construction, and enforcement of HOV lanes.
- The maintenance of our roads is very good. However, opportunities exist to improve the multi-modality aspects of our transportation system by improving air, rail and water services.
- All we really have are highways; I'd like to see TDOT provide private motorist with options through several forms of mass transit.
- TDOT does an excellent job of maintaining roads and provides valuable help improving rural airports.
- Our roads are great; water and air service is adequate; rail freight service is spotty and out dated; passenger rail service is nonexistent.
- Water and rail services are underdeveloped. Maintenance of roads has deteriorated in recent years. It seems like there are more cracks and pot holes than ever before and takes much longer to fix them.
- Roads are well maintained because they receive most of TDOT's funding. We have some mass transit in urban areas but not in suburban and rural areas. As our population ages we will require modes of transportation other than private motor vehicle.
- Great highway system and accessible airports.
- Our roads are good but air, rail, and water services could be improved. For example, the I-81 corridor would be improved by diverting freight from roads to rail, but that is not yet being done.
- Our roads are the best in the U.S. regarding maintenance and safety. Water service is very fine except for some locks in East Tennessee. Air Service in Knoxville is adequate for my level of use.
- TDOT's only focus has and remains on roads. Funding for various kinds of public mass transit is woefully inadequate.
- From talking with others and my own personal experience I think our roads are quite good. I don't know enough about air, rail and water services to give an opinion.

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- Our roads are above average. Rail, water, and air services need some improvement. TDOT should promote east/west rail freight line, the use of barges on rivers, and provide more money for air services.
- Roads in our major cities are strengths in our transportation system. However, passenger air service in Knoxville and Chattanooga is inadequate. Residents of both Knoxville and Chattanooga often drive long distances to other larger cities to get air service.
- Road, air, rail and water transportation facilities are above average compared to other states.
- Our transportation system is not as good as other states. For example, other states have better public mass transit systems.
- Roads are excellent. There is a lack of east/west rail freight line (e.g., Memphis to Johnson City).
- Lack of mass transit in our state.
- There are a lot of construction issues in our transportation system. For example, primary and secondary road construction happens to often at the same time leaving motorists no alternate routes.
- Roads are good to very good. Rail, water and air services could be much better.
- Rail, road, air and public transit services are good, quality services in our state.
- Opportunities exist to improve rail service and water freight transportation in Knoxville and other river cities. Our roads, on the other hand, are good.
- As far as I can tell, our transportation system is on par with that of other states.
- Compared to other states our transportation system is above average.
- New administration made TDOT more responsive to customers and communities. They now place value on communities' priorities. Our roads are top notch.
- There is too much emphasis on roads and not enough on mass transit and passenger rail service.
- Our roads and highways are great. It would benefit Tennesseans to have a metro rail system. Employed individuals could cut down on gas and auto expenses by using the rail system.

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- Our rail and water transportation has limited capabilities. Also, intra-air travel is limited.
- Our roads are excellent. Everything else is average to poor.
- Our transportation system is lacking a comprehensive plan. Also, there is a lack of alternate transportation.
- Road construction in Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga is terrible. Other than that the transportation system is excellent.
- Our roads are excellent. Air service is good. Both rail freight and passenger rail are poor. We do not have AMTRACK service and freight service is only short line and it doesn't connect major cities.
- TDOT has lowered its standards for materials in order to save money. The strength of material standards is lowered to save money now, but as roads deteriorate more rapidly, we'll be spending more money on repairs than is being saved now.
- The condition of our roads is superior to almost every other state. We lack passenger rail service. Nashville doesn't have a beltway that goes completely around it. If Nashville had a beltway, inter-state trucking could route around the city instead of through it. Public transit in cities is not good at all.
- I drive a lot in the state.
- TDOT has programs for all modes of transportation. They do a good job of allocating their money based on needs and use, not on modes of transportation that are less frequently used (e.g., air, rail and water).
- The transportation system is on par with other states, neither better nor worse. There is no choice of transportation mode, especially for rural residents and poor urban residents. We have a car based transportation system, gridlock, and heavy truck traffic which makes roads dangerous with many traffic jams on roads.
- TDOT has done a good job anticipating growth of traffic in the middle part of the state. They also have provided roads to handle the growth.
- Overall they do a fairly good job.

How External Stakeholders Think the Quality of the State's Transportation System Is Changing

Compared to five years ago, most external stakeholders thought the quality of the State's Transportation system had improved. Twenty-three (23) thought it had gotten "somewhat better" or "much better." Eleven (11) thought it had stayed "about the same." Eight (8) of the 42 stakeholders thought the quality of the state's transportation system had gotten worse. Some of the reasons for their ratings are provided below.

- Roads are maintained at the same rate. Congestion in the metro area is worse due to construction.
- TDOT no longer functions as a highway department to build and maintain roads in Tennessee. They are more concerned with their public image than they are in providing the best and safest transportation system possible.
- Roads have gotten consistently better. Here in Chattanooga there have been improvements to the connectivity of existing interstates.
- TDOT has made continuous improvements to roads that connect rural communities to state and interstate highways.
- There's no balance of choice in methods of transportation. A lot of money has been spent building new roads, but very little money spent in air, rail and water services.
- Air, rail and water services lack priority so they can barely hold their own. Road maintenance has been deteriorating over the past 5 years.
- I haven't observed any changes.
- I have noticed an improved interstate system.
- Somewhat more funding has been invested in air, rail and water services.
- There is evidence of constant improvement to our roads, construction of new roads and improved infrastructure.
- Cannot detect any changes.

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- Our roads have improved, both new and existing.
- TDOT does a better job internally coordinating its services for air, rail and water.
- Road congestion has been evident, especially on urban interstates. Air passenger service has gotten worse because carriers have stopped or reduced their service.
- I have seen a lot of road construction to reduce traffic congestion. Passenger rail service is now being built in Nashville.
- TDOT is now more organized and there is better communication within their organization.
- Funding for TDOT decreased 9% each of the past two years, that's about \$50 to \$60 million each year.
- Little improvement has been made to mass transit along with poorly designed additions.
- Construction that began in past years is now finished which has made traffic flow much better.
- No detectable changes in roads. Don't know about air, rail and water services.
- There have been major improvements to our road system. More roads have been built, lanes added to existing roads, new interchanges built, and existing interchanges improved.
- East Tennessee roads have been improved, but we still need an east/west route in East Tennessee.
- Quality of road construction and maintenance has improved.
- There have been a number of local improvements to interstate.
- New and existing roads have been improved.
- There is too much focus on big roads and not enough on building networks of roads. Transportation planning is not integrated with land use planning.
- I have noticed improved traffic conditions and wider lanes.

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- TDOT is more responsive to individual cities and counties.
- Haven't noticed any changes.
- The current infrastructure is well maintained and new projects are on line.
- There is an inadequate level of funding on all modes of transportation, especially air, water and rail service.
- No improvements have been made to speed up work zone construction.
- Our interstates are at capacity. We need to better manage traffic flow and volume, not just build more roads. We also should invest in the public mass transit system.
- Peripheral issues such as environmental impact studies and utility relocation consume money that should be available to build roads.
- The current administration has a long-term vision of bringing all transportation modes into the mix.
- Traffic flow is getting better in Nashville. Also, we lost American Airline's hub in Nashville, but Southwest increased the number of flights and provides low cost flights.
- TDOT's planning has gotten much better. They should be more customer focused and pay better attention to customer needs.
- Roads and railroads have degraded because there is too much public involvement. TDOT is too responsive to people who are not in the business and who raise issues that are not compatible with providing transportation services that support economic development.
- There has been expansion and improvements of existing interstate highways.
- Air service in Chattanooga has improved (many more flights). The interstates have gotten worse because there is so much more congestion and truck traffic.

What External Stakeholders Think TDOT Does Best

When asked what they thought the Tennessee Department of Transportation does best, a wide range of responses were provided. Some of the specific comments are listed below.

- Maintain roadways. It is evident in trucker surveys that roads in Tennessee are the best in the country.
- Provide emergency roadside assistance. I witnessed this service in action.
- Context sensitive implementation. TDOT has done a great job in reaching out to the public before design work begins and incorporating public comment, ideas and concerns.
- Resurfacing roads. In the past TDOT has preserved interstates on an 8 to 10 year cycle, and state routes on a 12 to 14 year cycle.
- Bridge program. Replacing aged bridges is vital to future transportation growth.
- Interstate aid. They have proven to be invaluable to troubled motorist.
- Build and maintain interstate highways. TDOT expands and improves the quality of roads through great project management.
- TDOT gains input from the public. They proactively solicit public participation in the long range planning process.
- People in key positions with TDOT are well qualified and are willing to innovate.
- Road design and construction is excellent. TDOT uses high standards to evaluate plans, materials, and completed work.
- In recent years, there has been much improvement in getting public involvement.
- TDOT does a good job maintaining existing roads. Roads are smooth, with few cracks and pot holes.
- In the past two years there have been more public involvement/hearings.
- Roads in our state are rated high.

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- Technology use has made the transportation system better. For example, we now have electronically controlled message signs to alert motorists of accidents.
- TDOT's current long-range plan integrates all four modes of transportation into a single comprehensive plan and reduces the potential influence of parochial political pressures.
- Rural airport improvement. We've gotten funds every year for the past five years to upgrade our local airport (e.g., extend runway, install instruments, and build new terminals).
- There has been a continuous effort to upgrade highways in rural areas (e.g., exit/access ramps, resurfacing, and connecting highways to rural roads).
- TDOT does a great job of repaving roads and preparing roads for snow/ice.
- Maintaining existing infrastructure. Our roads and bridges are well maintained.
- Statewide long range planning. TDOT solicits public involvement and legitimizes decisions.
- Incident management helps motorists. Assistance service in urban areas help clear incapacitated vehicles off roads in a timely manner which allows for quicker emergency aid to injured motorists.
- Construction management is done well because workers work all night and weekends to complete projects quickly.
- Building new roads. Our roads are among the best in the United States.
- Construction management. Expert staff oversees contractors using high standards.
- TDOT's attempt to gain input from various committees. They listen to the needs of all various interest groups.
- When construction is in progress contractors keep the public informed.
- Maintaining roads. TDOT prevents the deterioration of pavements and bridges.
- Gaining public involvement. TDOT proactively solicits public involvement and modifies its plans based on public comment.

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- Building interstate and state highways. TDOT only repairs and builds roads when it is needed or traffic becomes too large.
- Planning, contracting, and the administration of projects. Tennessee statewide investigation gains more input statewide.
- Building roads. Roads are safe and built well. We have the best roads in the U.S.
- TDOT's ability to be responsive to community preference. In the past two years, TDOT has greatly improved how well it responds and listens to requests from communities.
- Planning process. TDOT is creating a 20 to 25 year long range plan.
- Road Construction. TDOT uses cameras to monitor incidents on highways. Also, they have a proactive process to assess demand for new and improved services on interstates and secondary roads.
- Public involvement. The establishment of a planning commission and the use of regional work groups are some of the ways TDOT gets good public participation.
- Planning for future growth by way of committee.
- Provide better road conditions. I worked throughout the state and have appreciated the smooth drive.
- Gain public input. I served on the TDOT steering committee and it was a good process.
- Roads are the best in the nation.
- The use of community meetings.
- Tennessee has an extraordinary system of airports, which is very important to our economy.
- TDOT beautifully maintains state highways.
- Road maintenance. TDOT has made a continuous effort to repair cracks, pot holes and re-surface roads.
- TDOT's planning. They have comprehensive, timely and feasible studies. TDOT also handles environmental issues well.

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- Fiscal responsibility. We've always paid as we built. The state is not in debt because of TDOT.
- Build smooth roads. You can really feel the difference.
- Communicate well. They seem to try to get a lot of input and give feedback often.
- Public involvement. TDOT does much better at getting input from the public, just like this survey.
- Long range transportation plan. The planning process seems much more efficient.
- Planning for the highway system. Most counties are within reasonable distance of Interstate. Rural areas have better access to interstate highways.
- Public involvement in the planning process. TDOT now involves diverse stakeholder groups in its planning process. They use many methods to solicit stakeholder participation in planning and other decisions.
- Motorist assistance service helps traffic flow by reducing the time that incidents block or slow the rate of traffic.
- Expand and improve interstates. Lanes have been added and interchanges improved.
- Providing alternate modes of transportation to private motor vehicles. TDOT started planning for commuter rail service in Nashville.
- Making sure road construction takes place everywhere at once. 65 has been under construction for 3+ years.
- The airport in Nashville is one of the best in the country.
- Interstates are not always under construction. Tennessee has some of the best roads in the country.
- Build good roads. We have smooth, well built roads.
- Listening to customers. More effort is placed on gaining public involvement.
- Motorist assistance has made people appreciative of the service.

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- We respond well to requests made by local and state officials. When city, county or state officials ask for a service, TDOT responds quickly.
- Creating a multi-modal long-range plan. TDOT provides a 25 year plan that combines all 4 modes of transportation to meet the state's future transportation facility requirements.
- Managing construction projects. Projects are done before or by the deadline. Within the past two years projects have been finished before the deadline.
- Road maintenance. Tennessee has smooth roads with good lighting.
- Short term planning. Key legislators are made knowledgeable of current needs, making it more likely they will vote for funds.
- Road maintenance. Old roads are in good shape and TDOT tries to make improvements before tearing them up and starting from scratch.
- HELP truck. Accidents are reduced because of this TDOT program. Congestion after traffic accidents is much better.
- Communicating with local communities and state officials.
- Road maintenance. Those who use our highways compliment their condition.
- Railroad crossing. TDOT provides funding for improvement of grade crossings.
- Planning is open to public participation and stakeholders.
- TDOT hires creative people with innovative ideas.
- Communicating about construction projects. New commitment is working well.
- Planning road construction projects. We have many projects funded for roads and bridges.
- Identifying needs for transportation improvements. Participation in statewide planning process is excellent.
- Maintaining highways.
- Building roads. There are very few failures of road pavement or bridges.

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- Creation of long range planning. The plan includes an analysis/evaluation of proposed roads by the University of Tennessee to better distinguish whether road construction projects are worth doing.
- Maintaining current roads. Our roads are smooth and are praised by drivers from Tennessee and other states.
- Emergency road-side assistance. The monitored assistance program in urban areas helps to quickly clear up incidents and provide emergency services to motorists in need of it.
- Responding to customers. TDOT is now much better at soliciting the views of its customers and paying attention to their comments.
- Long range planning (25 years). TDOT proactively solicits involvement from a diverse customer segment and business partners to create a 25 year long range plan.
- Giving priority to protecting/preserving natural environment. TDOT is paying more attention to environmental issues now than ever before.
- Building roads. Our roads are well constructed and maintained.
- Public involvement. TDOT is doing a very good job of engaging the general public.
- Maintenance of interstates. Interstates are smooth. National Truckers rated Tennessee interstates as the best in the nation.
- Road and bridge repair. Roads are smooth and better than other states.
- Road safety. Law enforcement being present at construction sites increases the level of safety.
- Regional meetings to keep others up to date. Everyone who has an interest, has the opportunity to get informed.
- Maintaining interstates. TDOT knows that intra-city travel is dependent on the interstate. That's why it is so well maintained.

How External Stakeholders Think TDOT Can Improve

Some of the areas for improvement that were suggested by external stakeholders are listed below.

- Better relationship with road building contractors. TDOT seems determined to create an adverse relationship rather than a partnering relationship.
- Three lane interstate throughout the state. Interstate congestion and safety are the main problems TDOT needs to address in the next 25 years.
- Provide adequate funding for resurfacing and bridge programs. Stop taking designated road funding for general fund use.
- Become multi-modal. Being multi-modal will require distribution of funds in areas other than highways.
- Consider alternative funding methods. TDOT should follow the leads of other states looking at toll roads and public private funding.
- Planning should contain less public involvement. Public involvement during project planning slows down the process and makes it more costly.
- Simplify administrative procedures. Simplify procedures for various kinds of paper work, approval of plans, requests for easements, and permits.
- We do too much reacting to situations instead of being proactive.
- Manage congestion. Better use of multi-modal services. Multiple modes of transportation should be combined to help reduce and prevent traffic congestion.
- Manage truck-freight volume. Too many highways have excessive truck traffic.
- Re-evaluate the use of bonded indebtedness to fund future improvements. Current sources of funds may be close to their maximum revenue yield, but demand for transportation services will continue to grow.
- Publish current and future road projects.
- Loss of senior experienced officials with road knowledge. New hires lack practical experience about road building.

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- Re-focus on road building for economic benefit. The current administration puts too much emphasis on environmental issues and not enough on economic development.
- Industrial access program. This program needs more money so roads serving industrial areas can be built in a timelier manner.
- Communications.
- Respond to local needs. Local governments usually know what they need most.
- Communicate. TDOT is doing a little better job communicating.
- Support all modes. Highways are vitally important, but a well-rounded multi-modal system is key for the future.
- Improve collaboration with the Department of Safety and Law enforcement. Ticket motorists who violate construction zone laws and there by make construction zones more dangerous.
- Reduce congestion at major sporting events (e.g. NASCAR). Traffic congestion in areas close to major sporting facilities is almost gridlocked. TDOT should develop ways to better manage traffic at such events.
- They do a great job with the resources they have.
- Planning to meet future demands. TDOT needs to improve how accurately and comprehensively it anticipates the future growth in population and freight, and then create a plan that integrates all modes of transportation to meet the anticipated future growth.
- Strive to achieve the best practices.
- Continue the communication effort.
- Minimize congestion and delays.
- Once TDOT takes in the public suggestion, some how post the action taken. TDOT has been doing this to some degree by updating the website with information. However, it could be helpful to seek additional ways to reach more of the public (e.g., radio, T.V., news).

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- Finish road improvements and repairs quicker. Some projects may take longer for safety purposes, but improving the turn around time is needed. I appreciate the road improvement work running through the night. Thanks!
- Improve traffic flow in construction areas. We need to speed up the flow of traffic and reduce congestion.
- Improve freight/barges. Other states have issues that are addressed by specific committees.
- Improve inland river system by improving dams.
- Rail service and freight rail is poor.
- Place greater priority on services that impact older drivers. Intersection improvements; re-engineer rural two-lane roads, larger signs, brighter road striping (center line and shoulder), and wider shoulders.
- Culture change. TDOT should focus on how to best serve the people and improve freight services, not on how many lanes should be added to highways.
- Improve security at small local airports. Homeland security does not fund security at local airports, that's where it is needed.
- Provide infrastructure that allows people to get to work, school, shopping center, and recreation areas without requiring the use of a car.
- Inform the public on the total true cost of using an optional mode of transportation.
- Communicate with stakeholders. TDOT should discuss the decisions that will impact stakeholder groups before making a public announcement.
- Spend more money on roads. Too much money is being spent on studies.
- Finalize contracts on time. Pay final payment to contractors in a timelier manner.
- Long range planning. TDOT lacks a history of long range planning and is new to it.
- Diversity of employees and suppliers. There is too little diversity among TDOT employees and supply companies. There should be more minorities among the TDOT work force.

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- Construction zone traffic control and safety. Improve safety for the traveling public and workers.
- Use a corridor approach to make it more likely that forms of transportation other than motor vehicle will be considered by more people and freight.
- Use public involvement strategically so that regional TDOT offices do a better job of serving and satisfying their diverse customers, who sometimes have incompatible requirements and priorities.
- Coordinate land use and transportation policies to reduce sprawl from uncontrolled growth.
- Re-evaluate all current planned projects. Look into the project's impact on the environment and air pollution to prevent building roads that will destroy the environment.
- Cost/benefit analysis of alternatives to assess whether alternatives are more justified than roads.
- Emphasize freight on rail to reduce the volume of trucks on our roads.
- Speed up construction. Try to do business all over the state.
- Enforce work zone fines. Ask anyone in the Southeast/Eastern part of the country what the worst city is to drive through.....Nashville.
- Indict local and state officials for fatalities that occur on Tennessee roadways. Every fatality that occurs is preventable to some extent. A common source is usually dangerous work zones.
- Meeting the future growth in demand for transportation services so TDOT can accurately anticipate changes in demand and have facilities and services available when needed.
- Identify and monitor the trends in population and demographics. If TDOT stays more abreast of population growth and migration they can proactively meet the changing demand for transportation services.
- Water transportation. If TDOT tracked trends in the movement of bulk freight within and through Tennessee, they could better identify where it is possible to create or improve water freight services which will help transfer freight from roads to water.

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- Use all 4 modes of transportation. Allocate more money to non-road modes of transportation. We should reduce reliance on private motor vehicle.
- Address non-road needs.
- Address traffic challenges. Loop roads around cities and build new roads in under developed areas instead of just maintaining them.
- Address future projected needs.
- Improve public transportation in metropolitan areas. TDOT should provide convenient transit service from residential areas to shopping or work areas for people without a vehicle.
- Complete by-pass around urban downtown areas. A beltway on interstate that completely encircled a city would allow for freer traffic. It would give truckers an alternate route and would lessen congestion in downtown areas.
- Manage traffic better. We can't go on just building more and more roads. We should look at non-road modes of moving people and freight. Also, we need to evaluate public mass transit options.
- Land use planning. TDOT should collaborate with other organizations in planning for future land use to reduce the volume of motor vehicles on our roads.
- Coordinate with local governments. TDOT needs to increase their responsiveness to request from local governments.
- Distribute money across the state. Fair and equitable distribution of money for projects across the state. Too often only a few areas receive most of the money.
- Be cost sensitive. Spread out the money. Don't put all of our funds in one type of transportation (auto). We need to make improvements to mass transit so we can meet future demand.
- Coordinate projects with other agencies. TDOT should work together with other agencies. We can use their resources and get projects done faster and more efficiently.
- More power to local governments. TDOT dictates too much from the capitol. Let local governments have the final say as to what they need in their territory.
- Invest in pedestrian transit (e.g. bike facilities). TDOT increases the percent spent on auto, but nothing else.

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- Bolder initiatives for economic development. TDOT should re-focus its role to enhance development and not allow private citizens and non-business groups to have as much influence.
- Upgrade our transportation system. Our road and railroad services need capacity and safety related improvements.
- Address accessibility issues. The department continues to fund committees that ignore accessibility issues and the ADA requirements.
- Increase awareness of all TDOT programs. TDOT seems to be all about roads.
- More funding for mass transit statewide. There is a lack of funding for mass transit.
- Advocacy of non-highway projects. Rail, water and air service is almost non-existent. TDOT should become more balanced in their approach to transportation.
- Context sensitive solutions. Use it on more construction projects and thereby involve more communities in more decisions about transportation services in their community.
- Funding on public transit. We need more funding used on different types of public mass transit so we have options rather than just private motor vehicle.
- Increase funding for hiking and biking trails. Funding should be at a higher level.
- Shorten the time from identifying the need to deciding on a course of action. It takes too long to complete this phase of the project. Streamline the environmental approval process.
- Add shoulders to state roads that don't currently possess them. There's no place to safely park disabled vehicles.
- Be proactive about informing the general public about transportation issues. If the public is not informed they can't make knowledgeable suggestions.
- Retain experienced engineers.
- Improve farm and market roads. Reduce curves, widen lanes and build shoulders.
- Funding for light rail passenger service should increase at the expense of private motor vehicle.

- Opportunities exist to improve how well TDOT listens to its customers.
- Place more informational signs further back from construction sites. This will help provide current travelers with optional routes and the ability to react, and possibly avoid the construction. This will help lessen congestion through construction.
- Statewide passenger rail service. TDOT should use the right hand shoulders on interstate for passenger rail. Congestion will be reduced from city to city if they do so.

How Could TDOT Serve You or Your Organization Better?

Each of the external stakeholders was asked to identify specific ways that the Tennessee Department of Transportation could better serve their organization. Some of the suggestions are provided below.

- Encourage and sponsor participation in Womens Transportation Seminar. WTS is an organization that works to educate its members on transportation nation wide and regionally. It also provides networking opportunities with female professionals.
- TDOT needs to do their own inspection. TDOT is spending great sums of money for project inspection. In some cases 3 to 4 times the cost that TDOT could do in house.
- TDOT needs to improve right-of-way and environmental permit process. Many projects are delayed because of the lack of timely delivery of these important steps.
- Find a way to balance competing demands of various special interest groups. Small but vocal environmentalist groups stopped the addition of 1,000 feet to a local airport runway which would have benefited local businesses.
- Better communication about routine construction. Use multiple media and repeated messages to communicate information about road and lane closings and traffic delay due to construction and maintenance.
- Keep us informed on resources/services provided for low-income families, if there are any.

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- Provide more information. Provide the general public with information about TDOT's services and reasons for using public mass transit.
- Inform communities and suppliers about future projects so local governments can coordinate their own plans with those of TDOT.
- Return phone calls in a timelier manner. Sometimes it takes three to five days before you get a response from TDOT.
- Make sure communications with the public are timely and easy for them to access. Also, use multiple media to get information to the public about upcoming meetings. Use email, website, newspapers, and radio or T.V.
- Better overall communication and cooperation.
- Speedier results and completion of road projects. There are too many delays.
- Provide port facilities. Build new and improve existing river ports so they can handle more freight and thereby reduce the traffic congestion.
- Look at other states and their best practices. Find out what is working for them and what's not.
- Have a TDOT radio station. This station would run during bad weather months and provide various road conditions. TDOT should partner with the Tennessee highway patrol and different news stations to combine weather and road conditions/construction.
- Create a Tennessee River Commission that is dedicated to freight issues.
- Be more involved with freight issues and inter-modal traffic.
- Include AAA in more of their press releases so our magazine can help inform our users of road conditions. Have an AAA informational office dedicated to interstate plans. A national AAA office can help inform a national audience (via magazine and website) about construction in Tennessee.
- Give our managers "show and tell" at actual construction sites. We can then create articles in the AAA magazine and website which will help TDOT inform a larger audience about ongoing construction.
- Better planning. Planning should be open for public participation and stakeholder involvement.

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- Hire more creative people with innovative ideas and leadership.
- Inform stakeholder about the potential impact of TDOT's decisions. When TDOT recently changed two rules that impact our members, they didn't discuss the proposed changes with us in advance of the public announcement.
- Establish and maintain partnerships with ethnic chambers of commerce around the state. This will increase minority participation in TDOT's workforce and its suppliers.
- A regional office that collaborates with local customers. Regional offices do not yet do a good job of walking the talk of TDOT headquarters.
- Regional planning staff. TDOT should place long range planners in each of TDOT's regional offices.
- Quicker response and fewer errors by headquarter staff. I see too many examples of TDOT staff taking too long to make decisions on applications, contracts, and errors in their paperwork.
- Conduct feasibility studies on some of our ideas/suggestions to have an objective basis for accepting/rejecting alternatives to private motor vehicle.
- High speed rail in metro areas to reduce traffic.
- Vietnam veterans access to 65 north. North Nashville residents need access to 65 North. This will take a load off of Conference Dr., Long Hollow Pike, and Rivergate.
- Meet transportation needs of the ageing population. Develop mass transit, light rail and on-demand service to homes; provide transportation services that reduce reliance on private motor vehicle.
- Continue to include TEA in planning groups and commissions. Allow us to inform TDOT of our position on key transportation issues.
- Quality and quantity of information. Information regarding approved projects has been inaccurate, late or incomplete.
- Be more proactive in finding alternative forms of transportation. Place more emphasis on mass transit and fuel efficiency (commuter rail). Too many seniors only use bus transportation because they have no other options.

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- Provide incentives for people to be more fuel conscious.
- Assist the public transit system regarding fuel prices. Underwrite high prices with lower prices in times of extremely high prices.
- More coordination with local governments. Allow local governments to assess needs and provide improvements. Reach agreements with local governments about plan design and what improvements are actually needed. This will allow TDOT to save money because they will not be starting projects that local governments deem unnecessary.
- Outsource more work to help reduce the time it takes to complete projects.
- Have the organization that does the engineering design do the environmental impact evaluation to cut back on the time it takes to complete projects.
- Create a 30-day advisory that informs the hotel industry of upcoming construction. Advisory information for the hospitality industry would allow us to better serve our clients by passing along information about possible interstate closings, etc.
- Modify the policy regarding operating assistance funding and capitol expense assistance. By increasing contributions towards the cost of new public mass transit, TDOT would encourage construction of more of these alternatives and help reduce the dependence on motor vehicles.
- Increase resources for mass transit in urban and rural areas. TDOT is last in the country for funding mass transit.
- Provide support for additional sidewalks in communities. Lack of sidewalks can limit the access to certain communities.
- Only fund projects for communities that comply with ADA requirements.

Things that Stakeholders Think TDOT Does Now That It Should NOT Be Doing?

External stakeholders were asked if there was anything the Tennessee Department of Transportation does now that it should not be doing. Some of the suggestions are provided below.

- Stop trying to crucify contractors. The road construction industry is an important part of the economic growth of Tennessee. We provide thousands of good paying jobs with health insurance and retirement benefits. We are not the enemy.

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- Building roadways to all county seats. In some cases, roadways have been constructed where traffic does not warrant the capacity.
- Many county seats do not need or want 4-5 lane roads connecting county seats to interstates or state highways. The proposed bypass from Cleveland to Ashville should not be done. Other projects are more deserving and less damaging to the environment.
- Cities that continue to ignore their responsibility to comply with the ADA requirements should not receive funding from TDOT.
- Stop having committees make the decisions about road projects. Using committees is inefficient and ineffective.
- Too much emphasis is given to issues raised by a minority of environmentalists. Construction projects have been stopped when small but vocal minorities of environmentalists complain about environmental impact.
- TDOT should not be using state funds for bicycle lane improvements.
- TDOT uses too much input from the public and interest groups when building highways.
- TDOT should not be coordinating projects with other states.
- TDOT's money should not be used to cover the costs incurred by large publicly traded utilities relocating their lines along a right of way.
- TDOT should stop its involvement with hike/bike trails. Local governments should be responsible for hike/bike trails. Motorist should not be forced to pay (in a gas tax) for hike/bike trails in communities where they don't live.
- Stop being influenced by lobbyist. Highway lobbyists have too much power. Lobbyists dictate more than the people who actually use TDOT's service the most.
- Advocacy groups drive too much of TDOT's thinking. There is too much involvement and influence by private citizens and advocacy groups. They have delayed and stopped projects including Highway 840, which is needed.
- Don't manage local road projects. Local governments can manage effectively without TDOT running the show from the capitol.

Things TDOT Should Do That It Is Not Currently Doing

External stakeholders were asked if there was anything the Tennessee Department of Transportation should be doing that it is not currently doing. Some of the suggestions are provided below.

- Create a long and short-term plan that truly deals with the safety and congestion plan. The current long range plan does not adequately address funding for future maintenance and growth of the highway system. The plans purpose appears to be to move funding from highway to mass transit in most cases.
- Increase funding in other areas of transportation beyond highways. The state has recently developed a multi-modal plan. The money will need to follow the plan.
- Promoting systems that are more efficient. Virtually all funding goes to highway building and repair.
- Regularly re-evaluate its services for rail, water and air transportation and take appropriate action. TDOT needs to be more aware of current issues and evolving trends so they can develop appropriate policies and recommendations.
- TDOT should collaborate more with the Department of Economic Development.
- Evaluate projects based on land use practices.
- Employ event specific signage to keep traffic congestion down at major sporting events.
- Evaluate an east/west rail service. Explore potential benefits of using rail services to move people and freight along an east/west corridor.
- Give higher priority to road building and not so much to vocal minorities. Economic development should not be sacrificed on the altar of environmental issues raised by a tiny minority of people.
- Provided a metro area information channel. The new signs installed in Nashville are okay but difficult to read. You may consider having a radio station in the metro areas to tell motorist about construction and other delays (like what BNA has).
- More land use planning. TDOT should collaborate with local land use organizations to assess total environmental and economic consequences of proposed development projects. TDOT cannot control land use planning, but it should function as a major decision influencer on these issues.

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- Increase involvement in mass transit services. TDOT does not adequately collaborate with local governments regarding planning, funding, and building mass transit services such as light rail.
- Focus more on economic development.
- Provide more funding for mass transit. Provide citizens with alternatives to private motor vehicle, especially in urban poor and rural areas.
- Plan for future funding. TDOT should anticipate that current funding sources will yield less revenue in the future and plan what it will do to attain future funds.
- Collaborate with local governments. Lack of collaboration between TDOT and local government risks local transportation projects not matching TDOT's plan.
- Give safety and crash data to local governments. Help local governments react better to safety issues by revising road signs, traffic signals, etc.
- Participate in economic development around the state. Ensure major highways are within easy access of citizens. Provide more services to citizens other than private car.
- Expand motorist assistance program so aid is faster and more efficient.
- Have the organization that does the engineering design do the environmental impact evaluation to cut back on the time it takes to complete projects
- Improve communication. More timely information to help the hospitality industry manage visitor's expectations.
- Fine motorists for breaking down or running out of gas in work zones.
- Assign high priority to managing traffic volume. Instead of always using one solution (more roads) to increase the flow of traffic, evaluate other modes of transportation and stop building so many roads.
- Better planning. Don't start projects that effect broad areas at one time. This causes too much congestion.
- Spend more money on alternative modes of transportation.
- Collaborate with land use policy makers. This will help TDOT better manage future use and land development.

- Provide a more balanced transportation system. Historically and currently TDOT does not give enough money to air, rail and water transportation. Not to mention public mass transit.

Concerns that Stakeholders Have About Travel Safety on State Highways

Eighty percent (34 of 42) of the external stakeholders who were interviewed had specific concerns about travel safety on state highways in Tennessee. Some of the concerns that were mentioned are provided below.

- In a number of construction areas standard, MUTCD – maintenance of traffic procedures do not seem to be followed.
- One of the main causes of fatalities on interstates is head on collision. Most of these can be eliminated by concrete median barrier walls and proper signage.
- Design speed is too high relative to the posted speed limit. People are driving too fast for the road conditions.
- Lower the speed limits for all vehicles and enforce speed zone laws in construction sites.
- High trucking volume creates safety and congestion issues.
- Too much truck traffic.
- Semi-trucks should be restricted to the right lane. They should not be able to drive the same speed limit as regular motorists and should be subject to stricter regulations.
- Construction workers and motorists need to be made safer when in construction sites.
- Lack of shoulders and narrow shoulders on state highways.
- There are areas of falling rocks, especially on Mount Eagle. Also, the high concentration of truck traffic in Knoxville and other cities.
- We have an increasing number of elderly drivers. Roads should be better lighted with brighter stripes and road markings so the elderly can see.
- Enforce speed zones in downhill areas, especially for large trucks.

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- Reduce speed in higher traffic areas. Lack of bicycle lanes on state highways.
- High truck volume on interstates.
- Rural roads lack shoulder space. Lane markings are not bright enough on some highways. Lighting on roads and traffic signals need improvement.
- There are too many trucks on our roads. Something should be done to limit truck traffic (using rail to deliver freight).
- Construction zone issues.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on motorist/worker safety in work zones.
- Seems there are more accidents involving trucks and cars on interstates in urban areas.
- We need larger rest stops for truck drivers to stop off at. Also, the increased numbers of elderly drivers raise safety issues.
- There are too many traffic projects at once.
- TDOT should (if research shows a benefit) implement emergency call boxes on interstates for people who do not have cell phones.
- High volume of truck traffic. That is the reasons for additional lanes being added to interstates.
- There are too many car drivers that don't know how to drive on interstates or near trucks at 50 to 70 MPH.
- There's too much traffic congestion on I-40
- I travel I-40 a lot. Because of the heavy truck traffic, three lanes on each side would help the flow of traffic and improve safety.
- Traffic volume, especially on I-75.
- Highway safety and truck safety in construction zones are concerns.
- Truck traffic is too heavy. Trucks should have stricter regulations.
- The different speeds between cars and trucks create hazards.

- The Mount Eagle median is too narrow; railroad grade crossings.
- Ramps on interstates are poorly designed.

Concerns About Construction and Maintenance on State Highways

More than half (24 of 42) of the external stakeholders who were interviewed had specific concerns about construction and maintenance on state highways in Tennessee. Some of the concerns that were mentioned are provided below.

- Truck congestion is going to be a major problem on interstates. TDOT needs to start three lanes on most interstates just as many surrounding states already do.
- Roadway construction appears to happen at the convenience of the contractors as opposed to the traveling public. I suggest that traffic lane closure studies be conducted as a part of most plans.
- The time it takes to finish projects is too long.
- Traffic flow should be improved.
- Since the quality of materials used on roads has reduced, roads will deteriorate more rapidly and require more repairs.
- Signs are too confusing; inadequate visibility when merging with other lanes cause concerns; access ramps are too short.
- TDOT spends excessive money to replace rural, low traffic bridges with major upgraded bridges that are not warranted.
- More patchwork is done now than ever before with less maintenance.
- Knowing where construction zones are ahead of time (via TDOT radio station) would be great.
- Better bridge maintenance.
- Continue to improve coordination of projects so individual projects in close proximity are scheduled at the same time. This will reduce the overall time traffic is disrupted.
- TDOT should conduct an analysis of work zone safety to identify opportunities to improve, and then make the needed improvements.

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- Why are there so many construction projects at one time? It's hard to find areas without barrels. Also, TDOT should use performance contracts to better manage its contractors.
- Proper signage and the re-routing of traffic are major concerns. Safety for workers is also a concern.
- The overuse of herbicides to control vegetation along roads.
- Need more law enforcement in work zones.
- Projects last way too long, and are done at the same time.
- I honestly place some of the fatalities on the hands of our elected officials for not moving these construction projects along either more quickly or safely.
- Work zones around major exit ramps are dangerous. Also, intersecting roads are far too dangerous.
- It takes too long to complete construction projects; contractors should be given deadlines that they must meet or suffer financial penalties.
- Lighting and proper signage are inadequate in urban areas. Traffic flow, when one lane is closed due to construction can be dangerous.
- It seems that asphalt overlays don't last as long as they once did; potholes are not quickly filled anymore.
- Stricter enforcement in work zones is needed. TDOT should have areas along work zones to pull over.
- Maintenance of existing roads should have priority over new construction.

Types of Information External Stakeholders Would Like to See TDOT Provide.

Two-thirds (29 of 42) of the external stakeholders who were interviewed indicated that they did not want any additional information from the Tennessee Department of Transportation to provide. Thirteen (13) external stakeholders specified that they would like TDOT to provide them with various kinds of information. Some types of information stakeholders would like to see are provided below.

- More frequent and complete sharing of information about projects that impact local and MPO funding.

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- All stakeholders need to be a part of the process in developing specifications, rules and regulations that affects TDOT and the road building industry.
- TDOT should create a regional position responsible for planning and collaborating with local MPOs, cities and counties.
- Provide information dealing with construction. When, where, and how long construction will take. TDOT should provide this information on signs along the interstate.
- Give everyone target dates road construction will be finished. When it is not finished by that date, give the public the names and numbers of those responsible for not meeting the target date.
- Make information available through other publications not just mayor print media. Also, place ads and informational messages in ethnic publications.
- Provide information about air, road, rail and water transportation services; plans for the future, plans for construction and the benefits of mass transit.
- Provide an e-mail newsletter or an update of service.
- Provide accurate information regarding projects.
- Provide information about the volume of freight movement by truck/rail annually.
- Give information prior to construction and a notification of delays.
- Information for stakeholders about the potential impact of TDOT's decisions.

Perceived Adequacy of Funding for Transportation in Tennessee

83% (35 of 42) of the external stakeholders who were interviewed did not think funding for transportation was adequate in Tennessee; 6 thought it was adequate and 1 did not know. Some of the reasons stakeholders gave for their rating are provided below.

- Reduced funding in resurfacing is already causing deterioration of our interstates. Future matching funding is going to be short without a gas tax increase.

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- Transit and port/water transportation appears to be under funded.
- There should be a greater effort by TDOT to increase multi-modal transportation options for people and freight. TDOT should move more freight from trucks to railroad by funding properly.
- Our transportation system is in pretty good condition all around.
- Total funds are adequate; however, I disagree with how they are allocated.
- Funding is barely adequate.
- Funds for what TDOT is doing now are adequate, but for what they should be doing and what the public thinks they should be doing funding is inadequate.
- The funding is all that taxpayers will stand for.
- There is a lack of funding dedicated to mass public transit.
- It's just never enough.
- It will be increasingly difficult to get adequate revenue from current sources of funds (fuel tax). Future demand for air, rail and water services will increase and maintenance costs will rise in order to preserve our current highways.
- Funding is not adequate for water or rail.
- Open your eyes, more needs to be done.
- Demand for services exceeds current level of funding.
- Evidently, we need to pay our contractors more for early completion of projects.
- TDOT gives too much funding to roads. There are little funding left for other modes of transportation and inter-modal facilities.
- Funding is adequate for now, but future demand will increase and costs will increase. We are going to have to prioritize projects to keep expenditures in line with available funds.
- Opportunities still exist to improve our roads and rail service.
- Given the reduction in TDOT's budget over the past two years and the growth in population and commerce, the demand for transportation services is greater then funding can support.
- Our infrastructure is vital to our future growth and development.

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- TDOT has lost 9% of its funds each of the past two years. The only source of funding is the fuel tax.
- Future demand for all modes of transportation will probably exceed funding from the fuel tax.
- There are too many demands relative to available funding.
- More funding should be spent on commuter transportation.
- Public transit funding is inadequate.
- There is a lack of funding for passenger/freight rail service in Tennessee.
- Demand for all modes of transportation exceeds current funds.
- As fuel consumption goes down due to fuel efficiency and the price/cost, income from fuel tax will yield less than what is needed to pay for transportation services.
- Because almost 100% of TDOT's funds go to roads, there is too little available to fund air, rail and water services.
- TDOT lacks the necessary funding for mass transit, rail, water and pedestrian services.
- Funding is not adequate. More warning devices are needed at grade crossings.
- Too much of TDOT's funds are given to roads. Re-allocation from roads to rail, air, water and public mass transit should be considered.
- Funding for mass transit and hike/bike trails is inadequate.
- We have more needs than can possibly be supported by current services and levels of funding.
- There are too many opportunities to improve air, rail and water services.
- While funding for roads might be adequate, it probably is not adequate enough to support air, rail and water services.
- Funding for roads is adequate but not for all other modes. TDOT seems to pave roads that don't need paving.
- Funding is inadequate for rail services. Rail projects start but sometimes they do not finish. Also, bus service lacks the funds needed to be reliable. Mass transit funding needs to be increased, especially as our citizens become older and start relying heavily on these services.

Do You Think TDOT Uses Its Resources Wisely?

More than half (24) of the external stakeholders who were interviewed thought the Tennessee Department of Transportation uses the resources it has wisely. Fourteen (14) stakeholders thought TDOT did not use the resources it has wisely, and four (4) people either did not know nor had no opinion). Some of the reasons stakeholders gave for their rating are provided below.

- TDOT is spending way too much money on consultants while under utilizing the expertise and ability of TDOT people.
- We need more mass transit options not road builders.
- There is a lot of waste when agencies do not coordinate with each other (e.g. metro and the state don't communicate well).
- Too much of the funds are spent on roads.
- Administrative expenses seem to be a high percentage of TDOT's budget.
- TDOT spends too high of a percentage of its funds on highways and not enough on alternatives to the private motor vehicle.
- Too many road projects are approved without taking into consideration the needs of the entire state.
- Only a small amount of money is allocated to rail, pedestrian and biking services.
- TDOT's budget is lowered because of the high percentage of administrative costs.
- Too much politics in getting bids and contracts.
- 39% if TDOT's funding goes to maintenance and construction of roads.
- TDOT needs to add construction incentives to bids like Alabama and other states are doing.
- Too much money is spent on roads and not enough on other modes of transportation.
- TDOT uses resources wisely because our roads are of top quality.
- Lack of evidence to contrary.

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- Given the political realities, TDOT uses its resources as wisely as it can.
- No evidence of unwise usage in the past 5 years.
- TDOT uses its money well.
- No evidence of mismanagement.
- TDOT uses a conservative approach to financing and they are not in debt.
- TDOT has a good process for selecting projects, selecting contractors, and managing contractors.
- TDOT is better organized than they use to be.
- Given what TDOT has accomplished, they do a great job of getting value for the money they spend.
- They use their resources wisely overall, but after a need is identified don't study it to death.
- Resources are used wisely with the exception to freight/barges. Other than that, TDOT spends their money on necessary things.
- I think TDOT uses resources wisely now. I didn't think so a few years back.
- There is no evidence of waste or mismanagement.
- TDOT is a good steward of the taxpayer's money.
- They select qualified staff for key positions.

Future Challenges for Transportation in Tennessee

The external stakeholders were asked what they thought would be the greatest challenges to good transportation services in the State of Tennessee over the next 10 years. Some of their responses are provided below.

- Provide more efficient services to limited funded areas of transportation. More freight should be moved by railroads instead of building new roads so more trucks can carry it.
- Making good decision about where to spend funding. TDOT's mission should be reflected in the way they use their funding. Their mission has been and should be in the future to provide the best transportation system for the people of Tennessee.

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- Providing adequate funds. The federal government has recognized the need for increased highway and transportation funding with TEA-21 reauthorization act, TDOT needs to do the same.
- Dealing successfully with congestion. Congestion is a major problem in cities throughout the United States. Mass transit has not and will not solve this problem. Providing adequate lane capacity and alternate routes with bus rapid transit will go a long way in preventing congestion in urban areas of Tennessee.
- Increasing gas prices. There will be a greater focus on alternative modes of transportation.
- Funding relative to demand for services. The current level of funding is inadequate. We should find new sources of funds and manage demand so less expensive facilities will meet future demand.
- Maintaining current infrastructure. Prevent current investments from degrading.
- Increasing safety for the changing demographics of population, age, language etc.
- Funding. Most Tennesseans are already maxed out with their own expenses but would probably like to help. Are there any volunteer opportunities for citizens to help TDOT?
- Improving transit alternatives. Lack of transit options will hurt our system in the future.
- Increasing transit alternatives. There is no passenger rail service and an inadequate freight rail service.
- Planning for future funding needs. There are options that don't include road building.
- Fuel prices. The price of fuel will cause the volume of people who use mass transit to increase, funding won't effectively keep up.
- Aging population. As the population becomes older mass transit demand will increase. Nashville is so spread out that we need a better rail service to alleviate congestion.
- Lack of funding. All construction projects are funded by fuel tax and federal funds; gas tax is dedicated only to road construction so where will the funds come from for air, rail and water.

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- Changing priority of non-road service. For too long, TDOT's focus has been on road construction. This priority should be re-evaluated given the changes in population demographics and density, increasing public concern to preserve the environment, and the increasing concern about land use policy.
- Providing optional modes of transportation and making them accessible and at a reasonable cost.
- Getting the public to discuss and vote on issues and overcoming special interest groups' influence on TDOT. Too often TDOT makes decisions that only benefit special interest groups instead of providing the greatest benefit to the most people.
- Re-allocating money to public mass transit and rail freight services.
- Convincing citizens to invest in transportation improvements.
- Funding. Where will get funds required to meet demands for air, rail and water services.
- Establishing mass transit services.
- Staying ahead of the population growth.
- Addressing current challenges so they don't get worse.
- Building enough roads to adequately handle the increasing traffic congestion.
- Increasing funds.
- Balancing construction and environmental concerns.
- Funding.
- Managing the movement of freight traffic. Placing more emphasis on water and rail freight services to reduce the volume of trucks on our highways, which causes more road construction and maintenance.
- Managing the increasing number of automobiles and the rising costs of transportation. It will be a challenge to keep up with the changing patterns of automobile travel due to the cost of transportation.
- Land use planning. Land use planning and transportation planning are not connected which results in wasteful urban sprawl.
- Developing new sources of funding.
- Developing alternate modes of transportation and getting people to use them.

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- Better use of road capacity. Make high occupancy vehicle lanes available at none commute times. Also, change the hours of commute times to distribute highest traffic density over more hours of the day.
- Developing a three-truck strategy to reduce the volume of three-truck traffic.
- Funding. Our requirements for transportation services will increase, but revenue from fuel taxes will probably decrease as cars become more fuel efficient.
- Using less public input. TDOT has opened a Pandora's Box that should be closed to prevent people who don't understand economic development from influencing TDOT.
- Increasing railroad capacity for piggy back. Current railroad track capacity is close to its maximum. Additional railroad tracks will need to be built if freight is moved from truck to tracks.
- Funding. Current sources of funding (fuel tax) may not be adequate for future needs. TDOT should be evaluating other funding sources, like bonds.
- Get all interested parties to agree on the use of alternate transportation over roads. Historically, roads have been the first choice when it comes to transportation. Consequently, politicians and special interest groups combine to influence TDOT to continue building roads instead of using other modes of transportation.
- Funding. As fuel consumption goes down due to better fuel efficiency, income from the fuel tax will yield less than what is needed to pay for transportation services.
- Managing demand for public transit to reduce urban sprawl and preserve the natural environment.
- Creating an inter-city passenger rail service to reduce demand for roads.
- Finding new sources of funds.
- Providing mass transit services to urban areas. For both environmental and economic reasons we will need more economically means of personal transportation as an alternative to private motor vehicle.
- Dealing with sprawl. We cannot keep building roads to handle traffic congestion and to reach far suburbs.
- Changing the emphasis from roads to alternate modes of transportation.
- Funding. Because gas use is lessening due to fewer miles being driven.

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- Meeting the increasing demand for mass transit. As fuel costs increase, people will turn to public transit, but will TDOT be ready?
- Managing traffic flow and incidents. Traffic signals should be re-timed and coordinated every 2 – 3 years, not every ten years as they currently are.
- Rail and subway system. Land/property disputes that will result around locations of stations and terminals.
- Enforcing deadlines, because politicians do not have the backbone to take tough stances on large companies that fund government via their lobbyist.
- Airport growth. If it takes as long to renovate the Nashville airport as it does to build a road (65N and 40 to Knoxville) then the state will continue to have a bad perception by non-residents.
- Traffic management. Adding additional modes of transportation instead of just building roads.
- Funding. Continuous increases in the cost of labor and materials may cause tax payers to be less willing to pay more than they do now to fund transportation services.
- Funding. Revenue from current sources of funds may not be adequate enough to meet critical future requirements for transportation services.
- Anticipating growth and planning so we can have facilities and services available as they are needed instead of reacting to a situation.
- Making the waterways a more viable option of carrying freight. This will reduce truck traffic. TDOT should consider container ports on Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.
- Meeting demand for services other than private motor vehicle. Shifting the public from motor vehicle to mass transit, biking, hiking, and air, water, and rail services.
- Funding. Assign priorities to funding levels that will be less than the demand for the services.
- Assigning equitable priorities to competing demands for services that are made by communities, industries and special interest groups.
- Reducing traffic volume on interstates. Our interstates need improvements such as more lanes.
- Re-establish rail freight services (East/West). This will help reduce the volume of trucks on interstates.

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- Accurate designing and engineering to handle the increasing traffic.
- Funding. Current funding is inadequate for supporting all 4 modes of transportation.
- Using a corridor view and not single mode. Emphasize the use of two or more modes of transportation to move more people and freight within a corridor. Also, reduce the reliance on private motor vehicle and associated requirements for more roads.
- Developing adequate mass transit services. Reduce the use of private motor vehicle.
- Moving trucks through our state. There are too many trucks on our highways.
- Adequate funding.
- Broadening modal choices.
- Expanding capacity.
- Meeting the future demand for new and improved roads. Growth in commerce and population will require new and improved transportation services.
- Funding. Requests for services exceed available funds.
- Reducing/preventing congestion. Traffic volume will continue to grow creating more congestion than we have now.
- Quality of products. Lower material standards mean that our roads will require more repairs and have to be replaced sooner.
- Lack of capacity.
- Bridges over the Mississippi River. We need more and better bridges.
- Keeping up with the increasingly mobile society. Being able to expand and maintain transportation resources to meet the growing demands will be very expensive.
- Informing the general public about alternate modes of transportation. Manage a transition away from private motor vehicle to public mass transit (e.g., bus, light rail).
- Expanding road network to meet the increasing demand of commerce and commuters.

Questions that Stakeholders Suggested for the Survey

External stakeholders were asked if they could think of any questions they would like to ask on TDOT's 2006 Customer Survey. Some of the types of information and/or questions that were suggested are listed below.

- What types of transportation are people willing to use?
- How does the cost of fuel and other operating costs influence preference for private motor vehicle vs. public transportation?
- Do you think there is adequate funding provided for rail, water and air service?
- Are you satisfied with the processes for approving proposed projects, permits, and easements?
- Has commute time increased in the past 5 to 10 years? By how much?
- Should TDOT provide more funding for trails and mass transit services?
- Given a list of possible services (road maintenance, passenger rail, rail freight, air service, new highways, etc.), what percent of TDOT's budget should be spent on each service?
- Are you satisfied with services provided by TDOT?
- What opportunities exist to improve TDOT's services?
- What is your preference given various types of mass transit services?
- Under what conditions would you use various modes of transportation?
- What transportation services are you willing to pay to use?
- Would you like to see more freight delivered by rail/water then by truck?
- Which is your preference: a comprehensive statewide objective process of selecting projects or strong political persons influencing project selection?
- Under what circumstances would you use public transportation instead of motor vehicle to get to work, shopping centers, or recreational areas, etc.?
- Are you willing to increase rail service to lessen truck traffic on highways?

External Stakeholder Interviews Executive Summary

- Are you satisfied with major highways and interstates?
- Who should be held accountable for construction projects that far exceed the time allocated in the bid process?
- Should local, state, and federal officials be held partly to blame for deaths that occur on Tennessee interstates?
- What is the maximum fuel tax you would be willing to pay?
- Are willing to pay new taxes?
- Would you accept bonds being used to pay for transportation services?
- Given that there are competing demands for TDOT's services, how should TDOT weigh and assign priorities?
- Should stakeholder groups be more diverse?
- Are you satisfied with rural roads and mass transit?
- Do you know how roads are funded in the state of Tennessee?

Other Comments

At the end of the interview, each stakeholder was asked if there were any other comments they would like to make. These comments are provided below.

- TDOT appears to have adopted a social engineering agenda and is more concerned about media image, extreme environmental agendas, forcing mass transit in places it will not work, while ignoring their main purpose of building and maintaining the best transportation system possible for the state of Tennessee.
- There is a lack of transportation services in Tennessee.
- Hang in there!
- The long range planning process was a great start!
- Great job getting the public involved!
- They do a great job with the resources they have.

External Stakeholder Interviews Executive Summary

- I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the process of assessing customer satisfaction with TDOT.
- The recent process of long range planning is the most inclusive I have ever seen! TDOT used a lot of input from a lot of different sources.
- TDOT does a good job, in general.
- I applaud TDOT for thinking about the future, hope it is substance and not style.
- I appreciate TDOT involving us in this process.
- Thanks for the opportunity to participate.
- There should be more discussion between our industry and TDOT, with TDOT taking the initiative to making it happen.
- I'm very impressed with the current approach used by TDOT to evaluate proposed projects, solicit public involvement, and its concern with environmental issues. They ensure that Tennessee gets good value for its money.
- I bet most people don't realize how much TDOT does. You may think about a campaign to inform the general public.
- The current administration is on the right path by doing transportation planning in a comprehensive way.
- Thanks for including people from private sectors in this process. I suggest that TDOT continues involving the general public and diverse stakeholders in their planning.
- TDOT has improved services dramatically over the past 10 years.
- Ed Cole is doing a great job trying to introduce changes.
- I applaud TDOT for assessing customer satisfaction. I hope they use the feed back from this study. TDOT has done a great job reducing the disruption of traffic flow during holiday seasons.