

## ***2016 Statewide Customer Survey***

### ***Executive Summary***

During the fall of 2016, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) conducted its third comprehensive customer survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather input from elected officials, local governmental partners, and residents to objectively assess TDOT's performance and to identify opportunities for improvement. Previous surveys were conducted in 2006 and 2013. The surveys were administered to a random sample of 309 elected officials, 309 local partners, and 2,436 residents. The results for each group were statistically valid. TDOT also conducted a benchmarking survey so the results for Tennessee could be compared to states that border Tennessee and to states that are reputed to have high-performing departments of transportation. Some of the major findings are described below.

- **Satisfaction with Highways in Tennessee is High, But It Has Decreased in Many Areas.** Residents of Tennessee were more satisfied than residents in states that border Tennessee in 15 of the 22 areas related to the maintenance and management of highways in their state. Unfortunately, satisfaction among Tennessee residents has decreased in 19 of these 22 areas since 2013. The two areas that improved included: draining of water from highways (+5%) and how easy informational warning signs are to understand (+1%). The four areas that decreased most were: the condition of Interstate highways (-16%), the condition of non-interstate highways (-16%), congestion in urban areas (-11%), and snow/ice removal from highways (-11%).
- **Satisfaction with Non-Highway Transportation Options Has Decreased in All Areas.** Since 2013, satisfaction with non-highway transportation services decreased in all seven areas that were assessed. The biggest decrease since 2013 was with public transit services for the elderly and disabled (-6%). The largest decrease since 2006 was with pedestrian facilities along highways (-13%).
- **Although Satisfaction Has Decreased, TDOT Received High Ratings for the Value It Provides.** Ninety-five percent (95%) of the elected officials, 94% of the local partners, and 82% of the residents surveyed who had an opinion thought TDOT provides "good" or "ok" value for the transportation taxes paid by Tennessee residents. The high ratings that TDOT received for the value it provides suggests that the decline in satisfaction from 2013 to 2016 was most likely caused by rising expectations and a perceived lack of funding for transportation in Tennessee rather than by negative opinions of TDOT's performance.
- **There Is Strong Support for Transportation Investments in Tennessee.** More than 70% of the residents, elected officials, and partners surveyed supported the following types of transportation investments: (1) projects that reduce congestion on highways, (2) repairs/maintenance of existing roads/bridges, (3) safety enhancements on highways, and (4) projects that support the economy.
- **There Are Opportunities to Increase Overall Satisfaction with TDOT.** Based on an analysis of the importance that residents place on various transportation services and their current level of satisfaction with these services, improvements in the following areas are likely to have the most impact on overall satisfaction with TDOT in the next 3-5 years:
  - Improvements to the surface of interstate and non-interstate highways
  - Reductions in highway congestion in urban areas
  - Options for alternative modes of transportation (e.g., public transit & pedestrian/biking facilities)
  - Highway striping that is visible in wet weather