

Background and Objectives

To obtain information about transportation use and ideas about the future of transportation, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) has distributed a comment form since April 2004. The comment form solicited information about what modes of transportation people use, the challenges they face with each mode, the opportunities seen for transportation, and thoughts on the priorities of transportation goals and objectives.

Key Findings

- Fifty-four percent (54%) of respondents identified themselves as “commuters.”
- The most frequently used mode for non-work travel was the automobile (90%), followed by walking (79%).
- The automobile accounts for 84% of work-related travel, followed by air travel (56%).
- Trucks for work-related travel were used by 37% of respondents.
- Road congestion was the most-often mentioned challenge to traveling or transporting by automobile.
- Lack of public transportation, rail, walking, and bicycling facilities were noted by at least one third of the respondents.
- When flying, more than one quarter of the respondents noted frustration with the availability and reliability of flight schedules.
- An estimated 28% of respondents expect to retire within the next 10 years.
- Nearly one half of the respondents (48%) say they will need more walking facilities in the future.
- According to nearly two thirds of respondents, safety should be the highest priority for TDOT activities. Following safety are protecting the environment, reducing reliance on gasoline, ensuring public input is incorporated into projects, maintaining existing roads and maintaining traffic during construction.

Methodology

Paper comment forms with questions about transportation challenges and opportunities and goals and objectives for the Tennessee Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) have been distributed across the state through the following means:

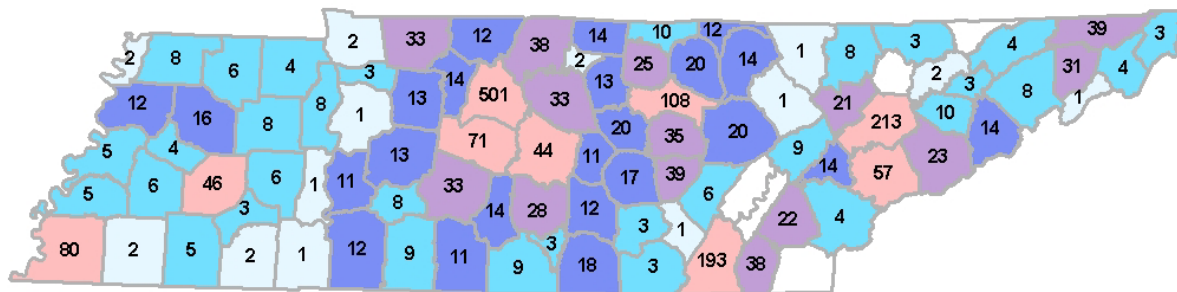
- A statewide media campaign
- Meetings of federal, state, regional, and local agencies and governments
- Public meetings
- Meetings of a Statewide Steering Committee comprised of representatives of communities, environmentalists, businesses, bicyclists, various cultures and races, economic development groups, seniors, persons with disabilities, transportation providers, and others
- Mailings to, and meetings of, nine Regional Working Groups formed across the state for the purpose of providing feedback about the LRTP
- Placement of a traveling exhibit at large-scale events and conferences
- Mass distribution through third-party organizations

Comment forms also are available on, and have been received via, the Internet. Many comments have also been received via the Plan e-mail at PlanGo@state.tn.us and calls to the toll-free hotline at 1-866-389-8443.

The 2,500 comments received as of February 28, 2005, are summarized in this document. Please note that not every response is presented here. This summary is a snapshot of crucial transportation issues from the respondents' viewpoints. The numbers reported are the frequencies of each response. This summary is not scientifically based and therefore should not be considered statistically valid.

Comment Form Responses

The map below illustrates the locations from which responses were received.



SOURCE:
 TDOT Long-Range Transportation Plan
 Comment Form Survey



LEGEND

Total Responses	No. of Counties
> 40	(9)
21 - 40	(14)
11 - 20	(23)
3 - 10	(31)
1 - 2	(13)
No Response	(5)

Not included on the map are 138 responses with no location indicated, 39 out-of-state responses, and 47 responses labeled as some form of "USA."

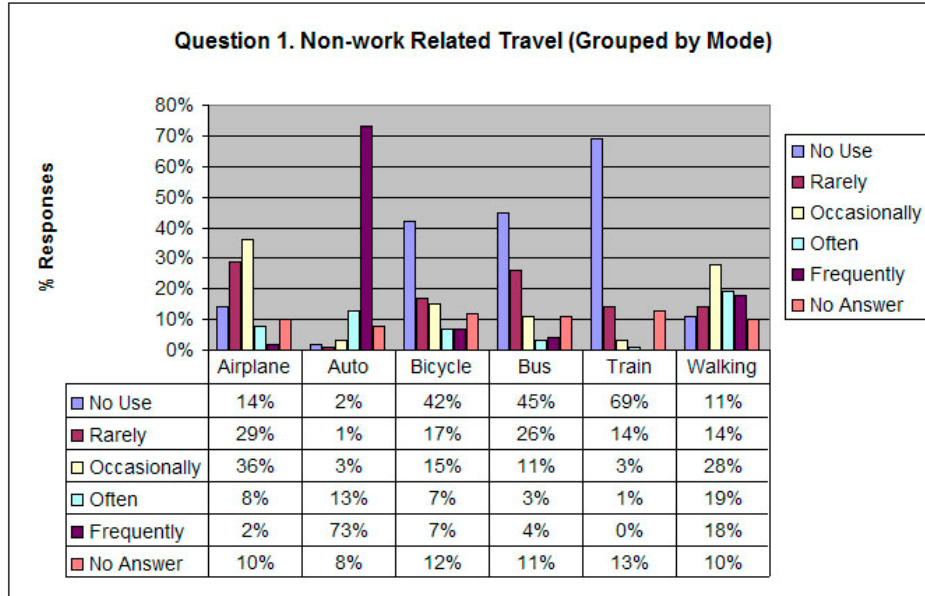
What was respondent perspective?

Perspective	% of Respondents
Commuter	54.0
Other	14.0
Business	12.0
No Answer	11.8
Involved in Transportation Planning	6.0
Elected Official	2.0

The other category included respondents who indicated they were bicyclists, retired, disabled, students, or tourists.

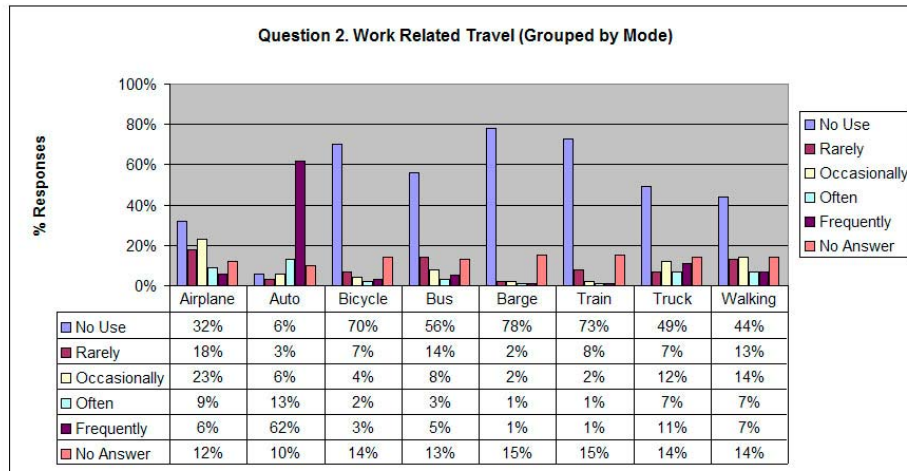
Detailed Findings

Modes of Transportation for Non-work-Related Travel



- The most frequently used mode for non-work-related travel was the automobile (90%), followed by walking (79%).
- Three quarters of respondents use air travel for non-work-related trips.
- Trains are used by 18% of respondents for non-work-related travel.

Modes of Transportation for Work-Related Travel



- The automobile accounts for 84% of work-related travel by respondents, followed by air travel (56%).
- Trucks for work-related travel were used by 37% of respondents.
- For work-related trips, 41% of respondents walk.

Transportation Challenges by Mode

For each transportation mode, the comment form asked what challenges users encountered. Open-end comments were categorized into the types shown below.

Question 3: Describe challenges when traveling by the following modes:

<p>Airplane (52% of respondents)</p>	<p>Of the 1,298 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27% are frustrated with flight schedules and reliability. • 21% cite frustration with long wait times. • 19% think the cost is too high.
<p>Automobile (88% of respondents)</p>	<p>Of the 2,191 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% are concerned about congestion. • 18% think construction is a challenge. • 9% say other drivers cause challenges. • 9% are concerned about costs for operating vehicles.
<p>Bicycle (46% of respondents)</p>	<p>Of the 1,145 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44% feel unsafe on bicycles because of motor vehicle traffic on adjacent roadways. • 37% mention a lack of facilities for bicycles. • 6% want to see shoulders and bicycle paths cleared of debris and obstacles.
<p>Public Transportation (42% of respondents)</p>	<p>Of the 1,038 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51% say public transportation was either not available or was lacking in availability. • 18% think public transportation was too inconvenient and time consuming. • 12% are unable to get where they want to go at the time they want to go by using public transportation.
<p>Rail (26% of respondents)</p>	<p>Of the 653 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86% say rail service is unavailable. • 7% report difficulty accessing rail service. • 2% note train routes and connections are limited.
<p>Walking (43% of respondents)</p>	<p>Of the 1,080 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% say few or no walking facilities are available. • 27% are concerned about safety when walking. • 10% live too far from destinations to walk.

Question 4: Describe challenges when shipping goods or transporting for business purposes.

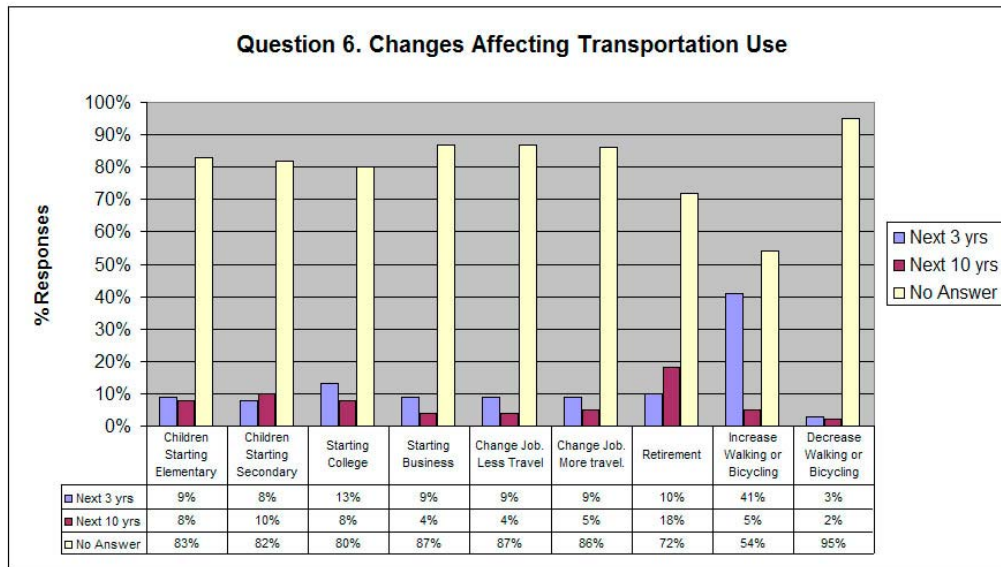
Airplane (4% of respondents)	Of the 112 responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% say the cost of flying is a challenge. • 23% find airline delays to be a problem.
Automobile (4% of respondents)	Of the 110 responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% note congestion and traffic as challenges. • 23% express concern about time.
Truck (7% of respondents)	Of the 168 responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26% say congestion is a challenge. • 21% say timing is a challenge. • 14% note the challenge of cost.

Question 5 asked respondents to list any activities or projects of which they are aware that will have an impact on any of the transportation modes. About one fourth of the 2,500 respondents mentioned that development and retail, residential, and tourism growth is occurring in their communities. Nearly 60 counties or communities were noted as having residential or commercial projects in the planning or building stages. Most of the communities identified were in more urbanized areas such as Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, the Tri-Cities area, Clarksville, Cleveland, Columbia, Cookeville, Chattanooga, Franklin, Bellevue, Bradley, Hendersonville, Jellico, Tiptonville, Morristown, Maryville, Fayetteville, Athens, and adjacent counties.

Among the activities noted as potentially having impacts on transportation include:

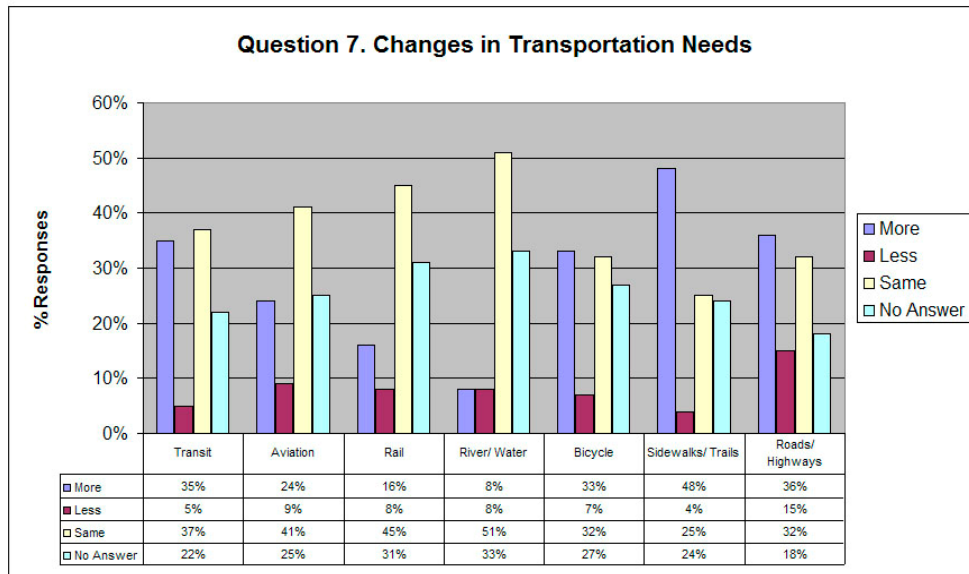
- An increasing and aging population, particularly in rural areas
- Implementation of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) elements statewide
- Commuter or high-speed rail projects to remove vehicles from roadways
- The possible closing of the Chickamauga locks in 2010
- Planned road projects
- Business expansion
- Riverfront developments
- Closing of the Oak Ridge nuclear facility
- Resurgence of short line railroads in middle Tennessee
- Increasing need for trucks to transport goods
- Decreasing supply and increasing cost of fuel
- Reductions in public transportation
- Plans in progress for bicycle facilities
- Increased troop strength at military installations near Tennessee

Question 6: What changes are in your future?



- An estimated 28% of respondents expect to retire within the next 10 years.
- Nearly half (46%) anticipate increases in walking and bicycling activities within the next 10 years.
- 20% of respondents indicated they expect a member of their household to begin college within the next 10 years.

Question 7: Describe how you expect your transportation use to change in the future.



- Nearly half of respondents (48%) say they will need more facilities for walking.
- More than one third (36%) report they will use more roads in the future; more than one third (35%) say they expect to use more public transportation.

Question No. 8: Rate the priority of various transportation activities.

Activity	High Priority (%)	Medium Priority (%)	Low Priority (%)	Not a Priority (%)
Maximizing safety features on roadways	61	21	3	1
Preserving or protecting the environment	57	23	5	2
Ensuring public input is included in projects	55	23	6	2
Maintaining traffic flow during construction	54	27	5	2
Maintaining existing roadways	54	28	4	1
Reducing gas utilization	54	22	7	3
Increasing public transportation options	54	21	91	4
Ensuring pedestrian walkways are included in projects	53	21	9	4
Relieving congestion on urban freeways	51	22	9	4
Replacing or repairing bridges	49	31	6	2
Providing signing during construction	49	28	7	2
Reducing vehicle emissions to improve air quality	48	24	10	4
Ensuring projects reflect community character	44	25	12	5
Ensuring bicycle facilities are included in projects	37	18	19	11
Increasing train services	35	23	15	11
Building more and wider roads	31	21	18	13
Improving freight movement	25	33	19	6
Providing better roadway signing	25	33	7	5
Providing rest areas for truckers	18	31	25	10
Improving passenger air facilities	13	32	23	15
Enhancing river lock and dam facilities	11	23	28	17
Improving air cargo facilities	8	26	26	19

- More than 60% of respondents indicated safety was the highest priority of the transportation system.
- More than one half of respondents identified these additional eight high priority activities:
 - Preserving or protecting the environment
 - Ensuring public input is included in projects
 - Increasing public transportation options
 - Reducing gas utilization
 - Maintaining traffic flow during construction
 - Maintaining existing roadways
 - Ensuring pedestrian walkways are included in projects
 - Relieving congestion on urban freeways

Data from Question 9 (response locations and types) is on pages 2 and 3 of this report.

Question 10 was an open-ended comments area. Several respondents left comments. Issues and comments reinforced responses on other questions. Many comments were received about increasing transportation options with emphasis on bus, bicycle, and walking modes. Also, several comments indicated more law enforcement is needed to reduce speeding motorists, particularly truckers. A complete copy of the comments received for Question 10 is available on request.