

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC INPUT MEETING RESULTS

May 17, 2009

Bismarck, North Dakota

INTRODUCTION

In April 2010, the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) and the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI) held a series of transportation public input meetings across North Dakota. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss: (1) levels of service state and local roads should provide; (2) current and future levels of federal, state, and local road funding; and (3) the state's Highway Performance Classification System and how counties may use a similar system to prioritize roadway services.

On May 17, 2010, NDDOT and UGPTI held a statewide Input meeting in Bismarck. People attending the meeting ranked their roadway priorities (i.e. roadway maintenance, ride, load carrying capacity, etc.) and indicated which roadway characteristics meet or exceeded their expectations.

This report highlights the significant findings and comments of the statewide meeting. The findings and comments are summarized as either "Roadway Characteristics" or "Transportation Programs." While the response rate is not statistically valid, it does provide an indication of the public's roadway priorities and service expectations.

ROADWAY CHARACTERISTICS SUMMARY

The table on the next page reflects the number of participants (*in blue*) prioritizing roadway characteristics for each system level. Roadway Maintenance and Ride are the highest priorities on all roadway system levels. Load Carrying Capacity is a relatively high priority on the state and county/township systems. This reflects the critical need to move agricultural production, energy development equipment and commodities, and other freight. Bridges are a high priority on the county/township system but are the lowest ranked priority on either the state or the city systems. This is likely due to the large number of county and township bridges with limited load capacities, height/width restrictions, and other deficiencies. Traffic Flow ranks as the third and fourth highest priority on the city and state system respectively.

ROADWAY PRIORITIES

<u>PRIORITY RANKING</u>	<u>STATE</u> <i>(44 Respondents)</i>	<u>COUNTY/TOWNSHIP</u> <i>(43 Respondents)</i>	<u>CITY</u> <i>(44 Respondents)</i>
1	Roadway Maintenance 20	Roadway Maintenance 24	Roadway Maintenance 23
2	Ride 13	Ride 9	Ride 12
3	Load Carrying Capacity 5	Bridges 4	Traffic Flow 6
4	Traffic Flow 4	Load Carrying Capacity 3	Additional Capacity 2
5	Roadway Width 1	Traffic Flow 1	Load Carrying Capacity 1
6	Additional Capacity 1	Roadway Width 1	Roadway Width 0
7	Bridges 0	Additional Capacity 1	Bridges 0

The table on the next page shows the percentage of people responding that rated each roadway characteristic meeting or exceeding their expectations. Over 50% of all respondents expressed the roadway characteristics of the state, county/township, and city systems met or exceeded their expectations. Several people also complimented the roadway maintenance efforts on the state system. Roadway characteristics on the state system meet or exceed expectations at a highest rate, followed next by city streets, and finally by roads on the county/township system level. Roadway characteristics meeting or exceeding expectations on the state system varied between Bridges with 98% to Load Carrying Capacity at 78%. Bridges either ranked the highest or second highest in meeting or exceeding expectations on all roadway levels varying from 98% on the state system to 70% on the county/township level. Traffic Flow on both the county/township and state systems met or exceeded the expectations of more than 80% of the respondents but only scored a 57% rating on the city system level.

ROADWAY CHARACTERISTIC EXPECTATIONS

<u>STATE</u>	<u>COUNTY/TOWNSHIP</u>	<u>CITY</u>
Bridges 98%	Traffic Flow 87%	Bridges 92%
Roadway Maintenance 88%	Bridges 70%	Roadway Width 90%
Traffic Flow 83%	Ride 66%	Load Carrying Capacity 87%
Ride 82%	Roadway Maintenance 64%	Roadway Maintenance 77%
Roadway Width 79%	Load Carrying Capacity 57%	Ride 67%
Load Carrying Capacity 78%	Roadway Width 56%	Traffic Flow 57%

<u>EXPECTATION LEVEL</u>	
	90 % Plus
	80 to 89%
	70 to 79%
	Less than 70%

ROADWAY CHARACTERISTICS COMMENTS

- Growth in the energy industry has contributed to roadway deterioration on all systems, state, county/township, and city levels.
- Ride quality is more important on a higher speed highway, such as the Interstate, than on a county highway.
- Designate a system of higher load carrying capacity roads to reduce the miles of roads needing improvements.
- Inform users about roadway load carrying capacity.
- Roadway width is a safety concern on the state system.
- The North Dakota Department of Transportation is exceeding expectations with regard to roadway maintenance.
- Winter snow removal on Interstate 94 has been great.
- The state should implement a 10-cent gas tax so it would have a source of funding without federal strings attached.
- ND 22 should be a four lane or Super 2 highway.
- County bridges are in good shape; township bridges are hard to replace because low traffic volumes

- Roadway width meets expectations in most cases
- Traffic congestion exists on Highway 22 near the mall in Dickinson.

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS SUMMARY

At the eight regional meetings, NDDOT staff asked the participants, “Are there any recommendations you have to either maintain or improve the transportation system?” In response to this question, meeting participants identified five transportation programs they believed would enhance the performance of the transportation system. The five programs identified are, county roadway planning, access management, statewide oversize/overload permitting, regional transit services, and state agency transportation coordination.

Forty-nine of the people attending the statewide meeting rated the importance of the five transportation programs. Over half of the people believed all five transportation programs were either “important” or “very important.” The program ratings were as follows:

County Roadway Planning	92%
Access Management	88%
Statewide Oversize/Overload Permitting	86%
Regional Transit Services	57%
State Agency Transportation coordination	55%

While all five programs rated as important or very important, county roadway planning, access management, and statewide oversize/overload permitting all received a very high (more than 85%) support. Several comments supported the need for county roadway planning and a desire for assistance or guidance from NDDOT to develop and implement a program. Meeting participants expressed strong support for the development of an access management program to preserve highway performance and for a statewide overload/oversized truck-permitting program. Many people also expressed believed the level of government enforcing overload/oversize laws should retain all revenue generated from permits, fees, and fines.

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS COMMENTS

County Roadway Planning

- County roadway planning should be uniform but not mandatory
- Counties and cities need roadway planning assistance
- Counties need assistance to establish uniform highway performance classification systems (HPCS)
- Roadway planning is very important but counties need help to implement
- If counties move forward with the development to HPCS they need to use the same standard statewide
- Counties may look to NDDOT for guidance in order to do HPCS planning -- or UGPTI or LTAP
- "How To" is a concern. The HPCS concept is pretty much accepted
- There is a need for roadway planning outside of city limits -- need to get ahead of growth
- May have a needs for a county planner

- Who would oversee HPCS classification?
- It (HPCS) is being done so must be important enough.
- County planning will be extremely difficult in oil development counties, drilling rigs move approximately every 30 days
- Chip seals should be done every 7 years -- now being delayed to 11 years
- Wet conditions over the last two years have deteriorated pavement more quickly
- Businesses and local residents are often indifferent to roadway needs and are only interested in what is in it for them
- Man camps in oil country place additional demands on local roads
- County HPCS -- doesn't need a large expenditure of resources to complete
- Mountrail County already has a Farm to Market road study done every year -- includes township officers that meet along with other officials (three townships are already working together by contributing money for one road) -- study is flexible from year to year
- Some counties haven't recognized the need to prioritize roadways previously
- Tribal entities have been consulted whenever possible
- The energy industry has been very responsive to county needs – they will not let workers travel on roads signed as "no travel" -- EOG will fire workers on the spot if caught
- How can "counties" justify a bridge for two families?
- We need to plan for less federal funding
- All local entities need to work together
- People commuting to oil work use all of the roads
- Recreational vehicles travel on all roads

Access Management

- Safety is #1 in oil country -- access management is needed
- It would help greatly if the State would take the lead and set standards
- Access control is a must
- Access management is important as long as it does not create more burdens on counties and townships.
- Access Management already being done so it is very important
- Develop access management without trying to retrofit existing areas
- Access Management would greatly help traffic flows – this program would be important where access points have visibility issues
- Scenarios where Access Management could improve traffic safety and flow;
 - Cenex frontage road in Stanley -- 8-15 semis back up traffic on frontage road to avoid the intersection at Hwy-8/US-2
 - Trucks in McKenzie County will take the ditch if necessary to go around traffic
 - Minot Industrial Park -- ongoing access issues
- Proven Access Management Tools/Techniques
 - Dedicated turn lanes with storage
 - Center turn lanes work well in towns
- Access management is directly tied to planning and zoning

Statewide Overload/Oversize Truck Permitting

- Concerns exist that counties and cities will lose local control

- Counties need to be able to have control of the permitting process and retain all revenues generated
- County officials are concerned about where the revenue generated from the permitting process would go
- Currently, there is no incentive for enforcement on the county level since all the money goes to the state
- This program will be very difficult to implement
- Establishing a statewide permitting system would be difficult to implement – there will be disagreement on weight limits along various designated truck routes
- There is a need for route planning in oil and gas producing counties
- Out of state loads would like routing from the state line all the way to Mountrail County
- Channel the traffic to certain roads instead putting these heavy loads on all the roads; reducing impact
- State should create a GIS system that routes all loads based a number of different elements
- Designate a system of higher load carrying capacity roads to reduce the miles of roads needing improvements.
- Inform users about roadway load carrying capacity.
- Ward County has implemented local permitting process
- State Highway Patrol directs the oversize and overweight loads onto county system first -- if county says no, then they are permitted onto state highways
- AG Opinion -- All overweight fees need to go into the General Fund
- The ND Oil Counties have a great truck permit system and have invested thousands of dollars into developing which the oil company's support, the state does not have to take over this program
- Standardized permitting needs to go across state lines
- Increased truck traffic will eventually force counties to coordinate and establish standard weight limits on various routes.
- We need to work toward greater county roadway connectivity
- New to North Dakota (in Feb/Mar of this year) don't understand Spring Load Restrictions -- when it's explained to them, they "hate" them
- Some companies are moving rigs without breaking them down first -- and are consequently overloaded
- Questions on weights that move above legal loads -- how much by weight?
- It would be beneficial to coordinate permitting process with other counties

Regionalized Transit Services

- Work through the counties/regions in order to have optimum available transit
- An example of successful regionalized transit services is Sioux county which uses shuttles to take riders to main "hubs" where buses start - hub and spoke concept
- What successful regionalization is there within the state?
- People are satisfied with the rural transit services currently provided. If this is the case why are we pushing to regionalization of transit services?
- Don't believe regionalizing transit services would reduce costs
- There is a concern that regionalization would result in longer trips than necessary for the users
- Is it possible to install a video network between medical providers so people do not have to travel?
- In the southwest part of the state, a regionalized/coordinated transit system is being studied

Coordinated State Agency Transportation Effort

- All state agencies need to work together to secure funding for our roadways
- Seems it would be good business to do this without being told to
- Need better coordination --streamline process among 26 entities that get involved in roads
- Very important because they facilitate the use of federal funds
- Work with the North Dakota Petroleum Council
- Coordination of needs to be done with federal agencies as well
- Better coordination needs to be done between divisions within NDDOT
- The environmental process needs to be streamlined
- In the southwest part of state, housing developers and tourism folks are already meeting -- has been a huge success for region