



The North Carolina Transportation Museum located in Spencer.- Photo from Rowan Chamber of Commerce

Community Survey

The first step in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan development is establishing the Metropolitan Planning Organization Goals and Objectives.

A comprehensive questionnaire was developed in May 2000. The purpose of the questionnaire was to survey a cross-section of citizens throughout the Urban Area and to gauge community opinion on a broad range of transportation issues. Results of the survey helped define transportation opinions and policy preferences among urban area residents. The opinions and preferences from the survey were used to develop goals and objectives for the 2001 MPO Transportation Plan update. This update and survey served as the foundation for identifying goals and objectives in the recently updated MPO Prospectus (spring of 2016) and 2045 MTP. Because of the depth

of this survey and degree of responses, it was determined that the results were still applicable for developing the goals and objectives for the 2050 MTP. The Goals and Objectives serve as the common theme for all MPO documents and are distributed liberally at every public event and workshop.

In addition, the MPO developed a survey instrument in 2021 for transportation finance and policy. It noted that the investment in the interstate was still a priority as well as congestion relief and improved travel time were priorities of the citizens who responded. Improved public transit capacity as well as the means to pay for it were generally supported based on the specific details.

For a copy of either survey elements and results, contact the Cabarrus-Rowan Urban Area MPO office at (704) 795-7528.

Summary of Survey Comments

The following is a general summary of the issues and the more widely supported recommendations. The public was ready and willing to speak on the issues, and, in no particular rank order, this is what they had to say:

The automobile is, and likely will remain, the main mode of transportation in the MPO for some time to come. People like the independence and flexibility the car provides. As can be seen later in this report, most people will pay much higher gas prices before taking an alternate form of transportation. However, many people stated that they would consider an alternative form of transportation if it met their needs.

Consensus was not reached on exactly what needs to be done regarding transportation needs at this time. The overall feeling that emerged was that the current transportation infrastructure system has some major problems, but the situation has not yet become critical. However, with a 7 to 10-year time lag between planning and implementation, the group members strongly agreed that the problems would only be exacerbated as time goes by.

According to public opinion, there is a high desire to protect the environment and improve the existing transportation infrastructure, as opposed to building new facilities. Several traditional congestion management options received the greatest level of support, including the improvement of traffic signal timing and coordination and the widening of existing streets. However, respondents also support development/enhancement of a public transportation or mass transit system, which was the top suggestion for improving the Urban Area's transportation system.

A survey in 2021 confirmed these opinions with the following goals and objectives as an interpretation of the public's preferences for long range planning in the CR MPO. A concerted effort was provided to ensure that the transportation

planning is a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive process.

Street System Goal

Develop an efficient street and highway network for the Cabarrus-Rowan Urban Area

Objectives

- Enhance mobility by improving the connectivity of the existing street network.
- Explore improvement to the street network that will most effectively handle capacity deficiencies.
- Support a safe and secure transportation system through efforts to reduce vehicular and non-vehicular crashes and points of conflict between modes of transportation.

Congestion Management Goal

Develop a local thoroughfare system that minimizes traffic congestion and maximizes system preservation

Objectives

- Improve traffic signal timing and coordination through intelligent transportation system measures.
- Develop streets and highways with the intent of minimizing travel times and distances.
- Pursue funding for the purposes of preserving and modernizing the existing system of streets and highways.

Title VI and Environmental Justice Goal

Plan and promote a transportation system that does not disproportionately impact minority and low-income populations

Objectives

- Assess and identify the transportation needs of minority and low-income populations.
- Avoid and/or minimize disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations.
- Assess whether the benefits and burdens of transportation investments are fairly distributed among all populations.

Environmental Goal

Develop a transportation system, which preserves and enhances the natural and built environments

Objectives

- Promote better integration of land use and transportation planning.
- Support multi-modal transportation projects, which preserve and complement the Urban Area's natural features.
- Promote and plan for a transportation system that increases the vehicle occupancy rates, improves mode split, and reduces traffic congestion.

Public Transportation Goal

Support efforts to improve mobility for Urban Area residents

Objectives

- Increase awareness of public transportation services provided by the Concord/Kannapolis Area Transit System, Salisbury Transit System, Rowan Transit System, Cabarrus County Transportation System (CCTS), and the Concord Express service. Explore additional public transportation alternatives for the Urban Area with connection to the Charlotte Metro Region.
- Support any expansion plans for Salisbury Transit, Concord/Kannapolis Area Transit, and Concord Express that will improve mobility for residents within the Urban Area. Conduct appropriate transit planning studies to evaluate the need and benefit of public transportation.
- Support the efforts of the public and private stakeholders concerning possible public transit options that would benefit the Cabarrus-Rowan Urban Area.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Goal

Promote development of an integrated bicycle and pedestrian network

Objectives –

- Pursue funding for a coordinated and a comprehensive network of sidewalks and bicycle routes throughout the Urban Area.
- Improve the transportation system with accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian access.

Freight Goal

Develop a transportation system that encourages safe and secure movement of freight goods within and outside the Urban Area

Objectives

- Maintain regionally significant streets, highways and bridges to a state of good repair to minimize truck travel times and cargo damage.
- Assist regional emergency management agencies to be better prepared in the event of crashes on the freight system, and in response to hazardous material incidents.
- Develop and support a freight transportation system that enhances the region's economic position and attractiveness as a major freight hub via an integrated network of highways, railroads, and airports.