



Transportation Survey Results
for the Clay County Comprehensive Transportation Plan
July, 2011

Prepared by Sarah Graham, RPO Planner

Andy Archer, NCDOT Transportation Planner

Clay County Transportation Task Force

Introduction

Public participation is a critical element in the development of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). Active public involvement will help to ensure that the CTP that is developed for a particular area meets the objectives of the community. If the plan does not reflect the values of the community, it is unlikely that it will be implemented and used to its fullest potential.

The Transportation Survey is a means of determining the values of the county as they pertain to transportation issues. This survey attempts to identify the area residents' perception of transportation related issues and to determine specific concerns that should be addressed in the CTP. The survey results are used to guide the development of a CTP that will best meet the needs of the county, and can also be a useful tool for the local government, NCDOT engineering staff, and the general public.

Survey Methodology

The Transportation Survey that was used for Clay County was developed by the Clay County Transportation Task Force. The task force is comprised of representatives from: Southwestern RPO, NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch, Clay County administration, Town of Hayesville, NCDOT Division 14, Clay County Economic Development Commission, Clay County Transit, and members of the general public representing public schools, private business, and bike and pedestrian interests.

The survey was distributed in two formats as determined by the Task Force. A printed version was mailed with a monthly power bill to 8900 county residents. Completed surveys could be mailed to NCDOT or dropped off at Kerr Drugs, where many people pay their power bill. The survey was also available on the Survey Monkey website. The URL address was on the printed version of the survey and was distributed via email to task force members, to disseminate to their contacts.

193 surveys were completed and returned during the allotted one month time period.

Survey Results

The median age of the respondents was 64, with 82% identifying themselves as full-time residents and 18% as part-time residents. 53% of respondents are retired, 3% unemployed, 24% work full-time in Clay County, and 20% work full-time outside of the county.

When asked which 3 improvements from the following list would best address the transportation needs of the county, respondents answered with the following frequency:

| Answer Options | Response Percent |
|--|------------------|
| Widen existing roads | 55.4% |
| Improve pavement and bridges | 53.1% |
| Add bike lanes | 35.0% |
| Greenways and off-road paths | 34.5% |
| Increase amount of sidewalk and improve existing sidewalks | 29.9% |
| Provide better information to drivers | 12.4% |
| Build new roads | 5.6% |

When asked which areas in Clay County were in need of *general transportation improvements*, respondents named the following:

Routes:

- HWY 64
- Tusquittee Road
- HWY 175
- HWY 69
- Qualla Road
- Downtown Hayesville

Types of improvements:

- Addition of bike lanes to existing roads
- Improve and extend existing sidewalks
- Add new sidewalks
- Widen narrow roads
- Improve road maintenance and upkeep on existing roads

When asked about routine DAILY travel outside of Clay County, respondents answered as follows:

- 35% do not routinely travel outside of Clay County
- 38% travel to Georgia daily
- 27% travel to Cherokee or Macon County (or beyond) daily

Reasons for traveling outside the county are as followed:

| Answer Options | Response Percent |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Shopping | 60.0% |
| Medical needs | 52.6% |
| Recreation | 35.3% |
| Work | 31.1% |
| Do not regularly leave Clay County | 13.2% |

Respondents were asked to rank *transportation system goals* in order of importance, 1 being the most important, 4 the least. The results were as follows:

1. Reliability
2. Accessibility/Connectivity
3. Ease of Use
4. Transportation Options

When asked which roads should have *accommodations for bicyclists*, the following roads were named the most frequently:

- HWY 64
- HWY 69
- Meyers Chapel
- 175
- Tusquittee Road

The *majority* who responded that they do not bicycle in Clay County indicated that the reason was their age or health. There were some comments naming safety and inadequate roads as the reason.

When asked about the *use of public transit*, 81% of respondents do NOT use it, and 19% DO.

When asked why they *do not use public transit*, the following reasons were given most frequently:

- No need
- Own/drive a vehicle
- Inadequate service
- Didn't know it existed

Those that *do use public transit* overwhelmingly named their destination as:

- Medical appointments
- Airports

When asked if they would use a parking area provided for carpooling or transit facilities, 34% of respondents answered Yes, and 66% No.

As to the question "What prevents you from using pedestrian facilities in Clay County?" there were several common themes in the answers:

- Nothing preventing me, there is no problem with current facilities
- What pedestrian facilities? Where are they?
- Live too far outside of town to walk
- Safety issues prohibit walking on existing roads
- Old age/poor health

General comments offered at the end of the survey that are not addressed by other survey questions were within the following themes:

- Need more roadside trash pick-up
- Don't want any more change or growth
- Grateful for opportunity to weigh in on transportation decisions
- Happy with transportation in Clay County
- Unhappy with use of tax dollars (on survey and unnecessary transportation projects)