

## **CONNECT CENTRAL GEORGIA PUBLIC SURVEY**

The Connect Central Georgia Public Survey was developed as a primary tool for gathering public input regarding travel conditions and needed transportation improvements in the study area. The survey was designed to capture information from a variety of sources, including:

- Study Stakeholders;
- Government leaders;
- Business leaders;
- Local residents; and
- Local workers.

The intent of the survey was to gather data and input throughout the 31-county study area. The survey effort sought to reach not only the decision-makers and community leaders, but also to reach citizens who live, work, and travel in the study area. Efforts were made to gather input from those individuals who might not otherwise attend a public meeting or community forum by promoting the survey through non-traditional mediums, such as the public libraries, local events, and the local school districts. As a result, twenty-six hundred (2,600) responses were received across the 31-county study area. The results from this effort presented in this document.

## **SURVEY DEVELOPMENT**

The Public Survey was developed to be distributed through a variety of media:

- An **electronic version of the survey** was created and placed on the Connect Central Georgia Study Website at [www.dot.ga.gov/connectcentralgeorgia](http://www.dot.ga.gov/connectcentralgeorgia). This online survey was available from November 1, 2011 through January 31, 2012. A copy of the electronic survey is available in the Appendix.
- A **paper survey**, both in English and Spanish, was developed to gather input in a public setting such as community events and to be provided to those who might not have access to a computer such as outreach through local school district students to reach their parents. The English and Spanish paper survey is contained in Appendix.
- A **survey flyer** was also developed for distribution in public locations. This document presented a brief description of the Connect Central Georgia Study and provided the survey link and GDOT contact information for the study. The survey flyer is found in Appendix.
- A **study information business card** was utilized at community events to promote the study website and online survey. The card included the name of the study, the website address, and a message to follow the study and to take the online survey. The card was

distributed to those who completed the survey to help them stay in touch with the study process. The cards were also distributed to those who were not able to complete the paper survey while with study staff members at the community event so they could access the study website at a later time. A copy of the business card is included in the Appendix.

The Public Survey was comprised of 26 multiple choice and open-ended questions targeted to reach those on a fifth-grade reading level. The questions sought to identify everyday travel habits within the study area, how certain destinations are reached, and the obstacles faced traveling to those destinations. The questions were developed in order to gather information about the respondents and about the existing conditions of the local transportation network. Special care was taken, however, to develop a survey that did not rely heavily on personal information. This was essential to bolster the survey's response rate. General questions, such as the number of vehicles per household, were used in order to help determine basic transportation capabilities of the respondents.

**Questions 1, 2, and 3** queried the respondents about where they live (county and zip code) and where they work (county). The detailed survey analysis allowed the study team to gauge survey participation and allowed for regional categorization of survey findings.

**Questions 4 through 8** sought information about respondents' household and travel characteristics. Respondents were asked how many people live in their homes, how many operating vehicles they have, whether they are dependent upon someone outside of their family for transportation, and if so, what their transportation needs are, and finally, how their children get to school.

**Questions 9 through 24** focused on specific transportation issues within the study area seeking specific information about problem areas within the study area. Respondents answered either "Yes" or "No" to each question and were also provided opportunity to input specific locations or concerns.

**Questions 9 through 11** asked respondents if they experienced traffic backups on roads or at intersections and whether traffic signals were needed in any locations. These questions provided the study team with location-specific traffic bottleneck and problem areas for which potential engineering solutions could be developed to improve movement and safety.

**Questions 12 through 14** focused on the need for alternative modes of transportation and facilities to accommodate them. Question 12 queried respondents about on-demand, rural or public bus service to gauge interest and possible locations for these types of services. Question 13 inquired about the need for roadway shoulders which respondents might feel are needed of safety, walking, or biking. And Question 14 asked about sidewalks, allowing the project team to assess the need for safe facilities for pedestrians in the study area.

**Questions 15 through 17** were related to traffic movement and safety related to with the need for turn lanes, unsafe intersections, and speeding. Responses to these questions helped the project team to decipher whether these problem areas require an engineering solution, a law enforcement solution, or both.

**Questions 18 through 21** sought to assess how well freight and vehicular traffic co-mingle on the existing road network. The questions inquired about problems with tractor-trailer trucks, farm tractor traffic, and difficulties getting onto roads or passing slow-moving vehicles. Responses to these questions enabled the project team to make determinations regarding roadway capacities and operations.

**Questions 22 and 23** provided respondents with the opportunity to express additional traffic concerns and to provide the areas of greatest concern. This allowed information about other needs and problem areas not addressed in other questions to be captured.

**Question 24** asked respondents to indicate if they avoided travel on roads due to any problems they had listed.

Finally, **Questions 25 and 26** tried to pinpoint frequency of travel to Columbus, Macon, Warner Robins and Augusta. Question 25 asked respondents to indicate how often they travel from home to each of these locations while Question 26 asked about travel from work to each location. This information provided data regarding both personal and work commuting patterns and to gauge frequency of travel along particular corridors.

## **SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

The Public Survey was publicized and distributed to a variety of audiences. This was to ensure that ample opportunity for participation was garnered from local citizens, business leaders, and elected officials and stakeholders. The wide-spread outreach was accomplished by:

### **Engaging the Study Stakeholders to publicize the Survey link within their local jurisdictions:**

Stakeholder meetings were held in September and November, 2011. Survey Flyers and the online link were provided to stakeholders and they were encouraged to publicize, post, and promote interest in the survey. Additional email and phone communications were also made with stakeholders over the course of the survey period to bolster participation.

### **Taking the Survey to the public via festivals and community meetings:**

The Study Team promoted the Connect Central Georgia Study with a booth at the Kaolin Festival in Sandersville, Georgia on October 8, 2011. Paper surveys were available for festival visitors to complete. Over 60 responses were received at that event.

#### Utilizing the 31 County School Districts to publicize the Survey:

During October and November 2011, contact was made via phone and/or email with the Superintendents for each of the 31 school districts in the study area to determine their interest in distributing the survey to their parents, teachers, and staff. The Superintendents were provided with the Survey link and the Study Fact Sheet. Participation options included:

- Posting the survey link on their district and/or individual school websites;
- Sending paper surveys home to parents for completion and return to the school;
- Sending Survey Flyers home to parents; and
- Emailing the survey link to teachers and staff and, if possible, parents.

Paper surveys and flyers were mailed to the requesting school districts and were sorted and packaged according to the district's preference to ensure easy and timely distribution to parents. The school districts were provided with pre-paid packages and a timetable by which to return completed surveys. For those districts wishing to publicize the survey on their website, the website link was provided and a follow-up was performed to ensure that the link was placed and functioning properly. Districts with online links were encouraged to keep the link active through January 31, 2012.

Of the 31 school districts, 23 agreed to participate with one or more methods. The following table summarizes the participating districts and their means of participation.

School District	Website Link	Paper Surveys	Survey Flyers	Email Teachers and Staff	Other*	No Response
Baldwin	X					
Bibb						X
Burke	X			X		
Chattahoochee	X					
Columbia						X
Crawford	X			X		
Glascok	X					
Hancock						X
Harris	X					
Houston	X		X			
Jefferson	X	X				
Jones	X					
Lamar	X					
McDuffie	X					
Macon						X
Marion			X			
Meriwether	X	X				

School District	Website Link	Paper Surveys	Survey Flyers	Email Teachers and Staff	Other*	No Response
Monroe						X
Muscogee			X			
Peach	X					
Pike			X			
Richmond	X			X	X	
Schley			X			
Talbot						X
Taylor	X					
Troup						X
Twiggs	X					
Upson	X				X	
Warren		X				
Washington	X			X		
Wilkinson						X

\*Other activities included placing the survey link in the principal newsletter for each school and robo-calling parents to inform them of link on the study website.

#### Posting Survey Flyers in public libraries:

Two copies of the Survey Flyer were sent to each of the 62 public library branches in the study area. The Flyers included instructions for posting the flyers in a public, well-lit location, such as a bulletin board or door. The Flyer was the same document used for the school districts, promoting the Study, providing the survey link, and inviting the public to respond. A sample of the Library mailing flyer and instructions is found in the Appendix

#### Publicizing the Survey link through the local media (TV, newspaper, web):

Working with GDOT District Two and Three Commutations, the survey was promoted and publicized to local media outlets including newspapers, television and web outlets. As a result, the survey received media coverage as follows:

Media Source	Coverage
NewsCentralGeorgia.com 01/20/12	Website – Article and website link
Fox24 News Central/ABC 16 Macon 01/20/12	TV News broadcast – Interview with Mary Huffstetler and website link
13WMAZ Where You Live Peach-Crawford 01/05/12	Website - Study link
Macon Telegraph 01/15/12	Newspaper - Article

Media Source	Coverage
Macon Telegraph 12/20/11	Newspaper – Article and website link
Georgia Public Broadcasting 12/20/11	Website – Article
City of Augusta	Website link

#### **Providing the Survey link to the local Chambers of Commerce, Industrial Authorities, and Convention and Visitors Bureaus:**

The Survey link was also provided, via email, to all Chambers of Commerce, Industrial and Development Authorities, and Convention and Visitors Bureaus within the study area. A list of those organizations is as follows:

- **Chambers of Commerce**
  - Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce
  - Augusta Black Chamber of Commerce
  - Barnesville-Lamar County Chamber of Commerce
  - Robins Regional Chamber of Commerce
  - Burke County Chamber of Commerce
  - Buena Vista-Marion County Chamber of Commerce
  - Warren County Chamber of Commerce
  - Ellaville-Schley County Chamber of Commerce
  - Pike County Chamber of Commerce
  - Twiggs County Chamber of Commerce
  - Talbot County Chamber of Commerce
  - Macon County Chamber and Development Authority
  - Jones County Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce
  - Sparta-Hancock County Chamber of Commerce
  - Harris County Chamber of Commerce
  - Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce
  - Thomaston-Upson County Chamber of Commerce
  - Thomson-McDuffie Chamber of Commerce
  - Perry Chamber of Commerce
  - Meriwether County Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce
  - Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce
  - LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce
  - Peach County Chamber of Commerce
  - Roberta-Crawford County Chamber of Commerce
  - Wilkinson County Chamber of Commerce
  - Washington County Chamber of Commerce
  - Columbia County Chamber of Commerce

- Taylor County Chamber of Commerce
- Forsyth-Monroe Chamber of Commerce
- Talbot County Chamber of Commerce
- **Economic Development/Industrial Authorities**
  - City of LaGrange Economic Development Authority
  - Milledgeville/Baldwin County Development Authority
  - The Valley Partnership (Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Marion, Taylor, Talbot, Harris)
  - The Development Authority of Peach County
  - Warren County Georgia Development Authority
  - Crawford County Development Authority
  - Development Authority of Jeffersonville and Twiggs County
  - Glascock County Industrial Development Authority
  - Cusseta-Chattahoochee Industrial Authority
  - Thomaston-Upson Industrial Development Authority
  - Macon-Bibb County Economic Opportunity Council
  - Jones County Development Authority
  - Houston County Development Authority
  - The Development Authority of Harris County
  - Forward McDuffie
  - Barnesville-Lamar Economic Development
  - Wilkinson County Development Authority
  - Development Authority of Monroe County
  - Jefferson County Development Authority
  - Development Authority of Washington County
  - Columbia County Development Authority
  - Meriwether Industrial Development Authority
  - Development Authority of Richmond County
  - Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority
  - Macon Economic Development Commission
  - Development Authority of Pike County
  - Development Authority of Burke County
  - Development Authority of Columbus
  - Taylor County Development Authority
- **Convention & Visitors Bureau**
  - Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau
  - Visit Meriwether County
  - Perry Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
  - Forsyth-Monroe County Convention Visitors Bureau
  - Macon-Bibb Convention and Visitors Bureau
  - Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau
  - Milledgeville Convention and Visitors Bureau
  - Columbia County Convention & Visitors Bureau



- Thomson-McDuffie Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Warner Robins Convention and Visitors Bureau

### **OVERALL SURVEY RESULTS**

As of January 31, 2012, there were 2,600 responses to the survey. Overall results for all 31 counties in the study area are presented below.

#### **1. What County do you live in?**

County	Responses	Percent of Total
Baldwin	28	1.1%
Bibb	49	1.9%
Burke	213	8.2%
Chattahoochee	5	0.2%
Columbia	56	2.2%
Crawford	11	0.4%
Glascock	25	1.0%
Hancock	2	0.1%
Harris	30	1.2%
Houston	35	1.3%
Jefferson	615	23.7%
Jones	49	1.9%
Lamar	7	0.3%
McDuffie	37	1.4%
Macon	8	0.3%
Marion	23	0.9%
Meriwether	678	26.1%
Monroe	5	0.2%
Muscogee	54	2.1%
Peach	58	2.2%
Pike	31	1.2%
Richmond	93	3.6%
Schley	12	0.5%
Talbot	20	0.8%
Taylor	11	0.4%
Troup	5	0.2%
Twiggs	3	0.1%
Upson	88	3.4%
Warren	147	5.7%
Washington	92	3.5%
Wilkinson	5	0.2%
Other	105	4.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>100%</b>



### 3. What County do you work in?

County	Responses	Percent of Total
Baldwin	40	1.6%
Bibb	70	2.8%
Burke	296	11.6%
Chattahoochee	10	0.4%
Columbia	32	1.3%
Crawford	10	0.4%
Glascok	28	1.1%
Hancock	20	0.8%
Harris	44	1.7%
Houston	69	2.7%
Jefferson	306	12.0%
Jones	60	2.4%
Lamar	13	0.5%
McDuffie	99	3.9%
Macon	10	0.4%
Marion	16	0.6%
Meriwether	267	10.5%
Monroe	17	0.7%
Muscogee	73	2.9%
Peach	36	1.4%
Pike	20	0.8%
Richmond	112	4.4%
Schley	13	0.5%
Talbot	9	0.4%
Taylor	16	0.6%
Troup	94	3.7%
Twiggs	10	0.4%
Upson	105	4.1%
Warren	49	1.9%
Washington	97	3.8%
Wilkinson	8	0.3%
I do not commute to work outside of my home	498	19.6%
Other	263	10.3%

#### 4. How many people live at your home?

1 Person	3.3%
2 Persons	15.8%
3 Persons	21.7%
4 Persons	30.5%
5 or More Persons	28.8%

#### 5. How many operating vehicles (cars, trucks, motorcycles) do you and the people living with you have?

No Vehicles	5.7%
1 Vehicle	24.5%
2 Vehicles	36.2%
3 or more Vehicles	33.6%

#### 6. If your family does not have a vehicle (car or truck) do you depend on someone outside of your immediate family to drive you places?

Yes	18.4%
No	81.6%

#### 7. If you answered "yes" to Question #6, please check the locations that someone outside of your immediate family drives you to on a regular basis.

Of the 336 respondents that answered this question, the responses were as follows (note that more than one response could be selected):

Doctor	63.1%
Shopping	58.0%
Work	32.7%
Church	36.9%
School	38.1%
Other	33.0%

#### 8. How do your children get to school?

Of the 2,452 respondents who answered this question, the responses were as follows (note that one than one response could be selected):

School Bus	49.3%
Ride Alone	7.1%
Ride with Family	37.4%
Ride with Non-Family Members	2.5%
Walk	2.7%
Bike	0.4%
No Children in Home	17.6%

#### Questions 9-22: Within the Study Area, have you experienced...

Issue	Yes	No
9. Traffic backup on roads	32.7%	67.3%
10. Traffic backup at intersections	31.6%	68.4%
11. A need for a traffic signal at intersections	29.2%	70.8%
12. A lack of on-demand, rural, or public bus service	16.7%	83.3%
13. A lack of roadway shoulders	20.4%	79.6%
14. A lack of sidewalks	30.3%	69.7%
15. A lack of turn lanes	21.0%	79.0%
16. Any safety issues	28.2%	71.8%
17. Speeding	43.0%	57.0%
18. Problems with tractor-trailer trucks	27.1%	72.9%
19. Farm tractor traffic slowdowns	28.0%	72.0%
20. Difficulty trying to get onto a road	19.6%	80.4%

Issue	Yes	No
21. Been unable to pass slow moving vehicles	34.0%	66.0%
22. Any other traffic problems	10.3%	89.7%

#### 24. Do you avoid travel on roads due to any of the problems listed above?

Yes	23.6%
No	76.4%

#### 25. How often do you travel from your home to the following cities?

	Several trips per month	Monthly	5 or more trips per year	4 or fewer trips per year	Never	Response Count
<b>Columbus</b>	317	131	140	497	1,025	2,110
<b>Macon</b>	231	132	164	572	1,027	2,126
<b>Warner Robins</b>	143	43	96	374	1,436	2,092
<b>Augusta</b>	758	191	170	290	831	2,240

#### 26. How often do you travel from your work to the following cities?

	Several trips per month	Monthly	5 or more trips per year	4 or fewer trips per year	Never	Response Count
<b>Columbus</b>	155	45	48	184	1,573	2,005
<b>Macon</b>	122	61	65	215	1,541	2,004
<b>Warner Robins</b>	88	30	29	143	1,700	1,990
<b>Augusta</b>	342	104	87	173	1,387	2,093

### **Location-Specific Responses to Open-Ended Questions**

Questions 9-24 included space to expand on the “yes” or “no” responses. Respondents listed specific locations of concern or expanded on the reasons they felt a component of the transportation system was lacking and could be improved. The full survey responses are included in the Appendix. Responses for several of the top reported concerns are summarized below.

#### **Within the study area, have you experienced speeding?**

Speeding was reported as a general issue primarily in urban areas in the study area. The areas in or near Augusta, Macon, and Warner Robins were noted most often. Speeding was also reported to be an issue on the interstates in the study area as well.

#### **Within the study area, have you been unable to pass slow moving vehicles?**

The following locations were most often reported:

- SR 56
- US 1
- SR 24
- SR 74
- SR 96
- US 27
- SR 49

#### **In the study area, have you experienced traffic backup on roads?**

The majority of the responses indicated that backup on roads is most prominent in the urban areas of the study areas. Many responses simply mentioned the name of a City or County in or around the four major urban areas. The following specific locations were most often reported:

- I-75
- I-520
- I-20
- Washington Road in Richmond and Columbia Counties
- SR 96
- US 1
- US 27
- SR 49
- Watson Boulevard in Warner Robins

**In the study area, have you experienced traffic backup at intersections?**

With the large study area, there was not frequent correlation singling out particular intersections. Three intersections did appear repeated times as follows:

- US 129/SR 44/SR 22 in downtown Gray
- I-16/I-75
- Bobby Jones and Washington Road in Columbia County

In addition, multiple intersections were mentioned along the following routes:

- SR 96
- US 1
- US 27

The final open-ended question on the survey read, “If you expressed transportation problems in the study area, please list your main transportation concerns below.” There were many location-specific responses and these can be examined in the appendix. The general themes expressed from the responses to this question are summarized as follows:

- Tractor trailer trucks on two lane roads and in small city downtowns
- Two lane highways connecting major cities
- Safety concerns for cyclists on the roadways
- Lack of public transportation (bus and train)
- Roadway maintenance (paving and potholes)
- Dirt roads that need to be paved
- Excessive speeding
- School Zone safety and access (turning lanes needed)
- I-16/I-75 Interchange
- Trucks speeding on the interstates
- Inability to pass slow moving vehicles
- Lack of pedestrian sidewalks
- Traffic signal timing and need for new signals
- Roadway shoulders in rural areas
- At-grade railroad crossings
- Congested highways