

SECTION 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Issue Identification

The High Point Urbanized Area conducted a survey (Appendix E) of transportation policy preferences among its residents so that transportation planning may better coordinate its goals and objectives with those of citizens in the planning area, as well as with the transportation planning departments of the Winston-Salem and Greensboro Urban Areas. This survey helped to define preferred regional transportation corridors and desired future transportation improvements. Historically, these items have been difficult to determine since the High Point Urbanized Area includes municipalities of varying sizes as well as a fairly large percentage of non-urban land. The survey also offers feedback for projects already completed or under construction, as well as guidelines for updating the transportation plan.

The issue identification process began with extensive research into the methodologies and experiences of other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in North Carolina. Most MPOs used focus groups and steering committees to facilitate the process, and many also incorporated some type of formal survey.

For the High Point Urban Area, it was decided that a random mail survey that tracked demographic information on each respondent would provide the most equitable way of insuring that all segments of the community had the opportunity to respond, and that the final survey results represented the entire community.

Two thousand names were selected at random from an updated list of motor vehicle registrations provided by the Department of Motor Vehicles in June, 1996; only those persons living within the boundaries of the High Point Urban Area were included in the survey. In addition, twenty users (approximately one percent of daily users) of High Point's public transportation system (Hi tran) were also surveyed. The questionnaire was developed by the High Point Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences*. The survey addressed transportation planning, environmental and preservation issues, as well as various modes of transportation and supplemental funding for transportation improvements.

* The Institute for Research in the Social Sciences (IRSS) is located in Chapel Hill, NC. Dr. Angell Beza, Senior Associate Director, was consulted for questions concerning the appropriate content, format, and reading level of the survey.

Of 2,000 surveys sent by first class mail, 504 completed surveys were returned, for a response rate of 25.2%. Of those returned, only 16 questionnaires were returned incomplete and were therefore unable to be used in the analysis. Only 98 were undeliverable due to incorrect mailing information. Those areas with fifty or more returned surveys were analyzed separately; otherwise, areas were grouped together as “Other.” In addition to the mailed surveys, approximately 1% of the Hi tran ridership was included through on-board surveying.

The questionnaire was designed to measure community response in three primary areas:

- Importance of transportation planning issues such as environmental preservation, landscape beautification, traffic management, and alternative modes of transportation,
- Critique of current transportation planning policies, and
- Acceptance or rejection of possible funding options for future transportation projects.

Transportation planning issues and policies were discussed together, while alternative sources of funding were addressed separately. Commute patterns by area were analyzed, and a prioritized list of streets/intersections most frequently identified as either in need of improvement or a potential hazard is also included.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

ISSUE	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Reduction of air and noise pollution	7%	29%	45%	19%
Planting trees and shrubs along roads	20%	34%	29%	14%
Reservation of land for future greenways and sidewalks	20%	39%	28%	13%
Protecting natural areas and open spaces	12%	21%	38%	29%

ISSUE	More Emphasis	Less Emphasis
Landscaping/highway beautification	55%	45%

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

ISSUE	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Reservation of land for future roads	11%	32%	40%	17%
Improving the timing and coordination of traffic signals	4%	9%	18%	69%
Widening streets to adequately handle traffic	11%	16%	26%	47%
Developing new roads to relieve congestion on existing streets	9%	10%	58%	23%

ISSUE	More Emphasis	Less Emphasis
Building new major roads	50%	50%
Widening existing streets and highways	84%	16%
Restricting driveway access along major streets	57%	43%
Encouraging non-traditional work hours to help rush hour traffic	72%	28%
Limiting growth and development density	68%	32%

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

ISSUE	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Providing public bus services	12%	34%	35%	19%
Building bicycle lanes	24%	47%	20%	9%
Providing transportation for the elderly and disabled	11%	24%	38%	27%
Provide alternatives to reduce neighborhood traffic problems	21%	28%	35%	16%

ISSUE	More Emphasis	Less Emphasis
Building new pedestrian facilities	65%	35%
Building bicycle lanes	39%	61%
Expanding public transportation services and programs	55%	45%

SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE FUNDING OPTIONS

Rank	Funding option	Support	Oppose
1	Charging developers impact fees to develop properties	70%	30%
2	Local bond referendum	60%	40%
3	Auto rental tax	64%	36%
4	Bicycle registration fee	33%	67%
5	License tag tax	19%	81%
6	Toll roads	18%	82%
7	Gasoline tax	4%	96%

TRAVEL PATTERNS

The following represents the highest number of responses in each area for the respective categories.

Place of Residence	Place of Work	Shop for Groceries	Shop for Other	Dine out
Archdale	High Point	Archdale	High Point	Archdale
High Point	High Point	High Point	High Point	High Point
Jamestown	Greensboro	Jamestown	Greensboro	Greensboro
Thomasville	High Point	Thomasville	High Point	Thomasville
Counties*	High Point	Trinity	High Point	High Point

Hi tran**	High Point	High Point	High Point	High Point
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* Counties include responses from residents living in parts of Guilford County, Davidson County and Randolph County, but did not live within a town or city limit.

** Hi tran is the City of High Point Public Transportation System.

STREETS AND INTERSECTIONS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

A list of the top-twenty most frequently mentioned streets and intersections that were identified as being in need of improvement.

<u>Street or Intersection</u>	<u>Location</u>
1. Eastchester Dr.-Westchester Dr. (NC 68)	High Point
2. Wendover Ave.	High Point
3. Surrett Dr.	High Point/Archdale
4. US 311 (Main St.)	High Point
5. Kivett Dr.	High Point
6. Johnson St.	High Point
7. Brentwood St.	High Point
8. Kirkwood St. @ Parris Ave.	High Point
9. Fairfield Rd.	High Point
10. NC Hwy 109	Thomasville
11. Skeet Club Rd. @ NC 68	High Point
12. Old Winston Rd	High Point
13. Oakview Rd.	High Point
14. English Rd.	High Point
15. NC Hwy 62 @ Archdale Rd. @ Braxton Craven Rd.	Archdale
16. Julian Ave.	Thomasville
17. Lexington Ave.	High Point
18. Phillips Ave.	High Point
19. Archdale Rd. @ Lane Dr. @ Archdale Industrial Park	Archdale
20. Scientific St.	High Point/Jamestown

2.2 Land Use

Each jurisdiction in the MPO is responsible for its own land use planning. When making transportation improvement priority decisions, every effort is made to ensure that the improvement is compatible and consistent with the desired land use for that area. In the future, the MPO staff will develop an MPO-wide land use map to assist with these decisions.

There are several regional land use issues that will impact future land use and transportation decisions in the future. Among these are:

- **Randleman Reservoir:** It is assumed that the Randleman Reservoir would be constructed. The Randleman Reservoir watershed is divided into a General Watershed Area and Watershed Critical Area, which surrounds the reservoir and limits built-upon area and restricts land uses.
- **U.S. 311 Bypass** It is anticipated that the completion of the US 311 Bypass by the year 2025 will have an effect on land-use in and around the interchanges of the highway.
- **NC Hwy. 109 and Westside Thoroughfare** These two improvements primarily within Davidson County will have an effect on land-use, to what degree is uncertain at best. However, there is a need to identify the potential for some growth along Wallburg-High Point Road as utilities become available.
- **Business 85 Corridor & Grandover to the East** Given the amount of available land with access both north and south of Business 85, we anticipate an increase in industrial employment along the corridor. In addition, the advent of Grandover will most likely result in some spillover of the office and service sector employment as well as increase the allocation of households within the immediate area.

2.3 Air Quality

Air Quality is one of the Urbanized Area's most pressing environmental concerns. The High Point Urbanized Area MPO is currently designated as being in nonattainment area for the 8-hour ozone standard. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, the Transportation Plan is not only subject to periodic reviews for applicability but also to the requirement for conformity determinations and analyses. Conformity analyses and determinations only affect the fiscally constrained portion of the Transportation Plan. There is also a distinction between a conformity analysis and a conformity determination. The purpose of a conformity analysis is to support a conformity determination.

Nonattainment and maintenance areas are different from attainment areas because conformity determinations are tied to the fiscally constrained portion of the Transportation Plan. Conformity also requires that the MTIP be a subset of the LRTP.

An Executive Summary of the High Point MPO's Conformity Analysis Report is attached in Appendix B.

2.4 Other Transportation Initiatives

Numerous studies and plans have been conducted for the High Point Urbanized Area as a part of continuing transportation planning projects. These studies, which are involved with the metropolitan planning process, have been mandated by the federal regulations regarding a continuing transportation planning process. These efforts are ongoing and require updating on a regular basis.

In addition to these studies, there are special studies which have been conducted as a part of the Piedmont Triad Regional Transportation Planning Study (PTRTS). These include the Michael Gallis & Associates *Growth Shaping Forces* study and TULUP (Triad Urban Land Use Project). The TULUP project lasted approximately five years and resulted in the identification of the growth issues in the region.

In addition to the two previous studies that have been mentioned, the Transit 2001 Study, which was mandated by the governor and produced by the NCDOT, also has significant elements that relate to High Point. This study is a plan for the future of transit in North Carolina, and the idea is to make the transition in emphasis for the urban areas from highways to transit.

The North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation in August 1997 that enabled the creation of the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART). The legislation set forth the purpose of the Authority and established membership for the Governing Board. In accordance with the legislation, the cities of Burlington, Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem passed resolutions to create the Authority.

The primary purpose of the Authority was to address transportation issues on a regional basis and administer the regional transportation plan. The PART legislation established the initial "service area" which consisted of two whole counties and parts of three others. The legislation contained provisions for increasing the service area by adding whole counties, up to a maximum of twelve, and increasing representation on the Board of Trustees.

The PART submitted legislation to the General Assembly to allow each county in the Triad region to decide whether to allow PART to collect a tax on the rental of automobiles. As of this writing, only Guilford County and Forsyth County have allowed this tax.