GEORGIA DOT RESEARCH PROJECT 15-18

FINAL REPORT

DELIVERING GDOT'S WORK PROGRAM: DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION AT PUBLIC MEETINGS AND OPEN HOUSES TO ENHANCE THE CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF NEED AND PURPOSE, TRANSPORTATION DEFICIENCIES, AND CONSEQUENCES OF NOT IMPLEMENTING IMPROVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH GDOT'S PROPOSED WORK PROGRAM

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1. Report No.: FHWA-GA-17-1518	2. Government Accession No.:	3. Recipient's Catalog No.:	
4. Title and Subtitle: Delivering GDOT'S Work Program: Developing strategies for successful communication at Public Meetings and Open Houses to enhance the conceptual understanding and awareness of Need and Purpose, transportation deficiencies, and consequences of not implementing improvements associated with GDOT's proposed Work Program		5. Report Date: May 2017	
		6. Performing Organization Code:	
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9. Performing Organization Name and Address: Department of Civil Engineering and Construction Management, Information Technology and Communication Arts Georgia Southern University PO Box 8077 Statesboro, GA 30460-8077		10. Work Unit No.:	
		11. Contract or Grant No.: RP 15-18 / 0013245	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address: Georgia Department of Transportation Office of Research 15 Kennedy Drive Forest Park, GA 30297-2534		13. Type of Report and Period Covered: Final; December 2015 - May 2017	
		14. Sponsoring Agency Code:	
15. Supplementary Notes: Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.			

16. Abstract:

The research project's purpose was to determine the most effective strategies, methods, and formats to inform the public about Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT) Work Program. The researchers investigated the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) and other state DOTs to determine what methods to employ for best practices to get public involvement. The project also looked to mass communication scholars to determine better ways to get public input and understanding, which is integral to the work done by GDOT. The study is providing an actual guide outlining better ways to present information in order to inform the public about GDOT's Work Program. The guide is inclusive of tools, visual formats, and strategies for the GDOT to provide the public with concise, understandable messaging in user-friendly formats, and to present approaches for keen invitations to comment and feedback as early as possible in the project life. As other state DOTs were examined, the conceptual guide recommends some best practices and successful strategies for improving content of meetings. After many individuals were surveyed for trust and knowledge about GDOT projects, recommendations were proposed to improve their participation in Public Meetings and Open Houses. Agenda setting and agenda building findings from the news media practitioners' interviews allowed researchers to recommend effective options for preparation of GDOT news to media. Finally, systematic messaging strategies and measures were recommended to determine the success of the strategies along with tactics for early public involvement in the planning process.

17. Key Words: GDOT Work Program, Open Houses, public input, news media, messaging strategies		18. Distribution Statement:	
19. Security Classification (of this report): Unclassified	20. Security classification (of this page): Unclassified	21. Number of Pages: 244	22. Price:

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In cooperation with

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

May 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GDOT has a mission integral to the safety and security of Georgia residents, including maintaining state roads and bridges, and other modes of transportation, such as rails and air safety planning, and overseeing waterways, including intercoastal waterways. Despite being an organization that impacts everyday life for individuals in the state of Georgia, many residents seem unaware of the benefits this agency provides to them. Many of the project messages by GDOT seem to get "lost in translation" with individuals failing to understand the benefits of these projects. Consequently, the interest in Open House formats can be improved and, conceivably, the understanding and trust of the GDOT's Work Program may be increased. The objective of this study was to determine the most effective strategies, methods, and formats to educate the public about GDOT's Work Program. The researchers looked to the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT), and other state DOTs to determine best practices for public involvement. The researchers also investigated mass communication scholars' research to identify better communication techniques GDOT might use in reaching out to the public and to the media about the importance of its Work Program.

The proposed study has identified strategies and techniques for GDOT to use to proactively and clearly get its message out about the projects being done by the state agency. With regard to proactive messaging, this final report, the Conceptual Guide herein, suggests a multifaceted approach that includes effective use of the local media, as well as a more grass roots approach to community outreach through the use of established community organizations. The research approach includes two surveys, interviews with news media practitioners, and an investigation on best practices in government-based

transportation agencies with a specific focus on communication practices and also on the use of technology to improve communication.

The first survey was administered to individuals to understand their level of trust and knowledge of the GDOT and its Work Program. The second survey consisted of interviews of news media practitioners. The purpose of the interviews was to understand how GDOT might better prepare messages for the media to use to provide better coverage of GDOT-related stories and to reach the public more effectively through the media. The results of the research on best practices along with the results of the two surveys were combined to produce the present Conceptual Guide customized for GDOT. The Guide outlines communication strategies to improve understanding and acceptance, awareness of projects, and increase public participation in Open Houses. The Conceptual Guide was completed by a research team consisting of two civil engineers with experience in construction, a mass communications specialist, and an information technology specialist. The civil engineers conveyed a better understanding for the nature of these projects and the technical details of the projects that the GDOT is trying to communicate in Open Houses. The mass communications specialist investigated the best and most effective communication strategies for the projects, as well as gauging public trust and knowledge about GDOT projects. The information technology specialist was instrumental in distribution of surveys and analysis of results, as well as the various technologies and formats that can be used for transmitting information/messages.

The findings and recommendations are included in each individual chapter and reinforced in the final chapter. The Guide includes tools, visual formats, and strategies for GDOT to provide the public with concise and more user-friendly messaging formats.

Also, it presents approaches to elicit comments from the public and to receive feedback as early as possible in the project life cycle. From the analysis of other state DOTs' best practices and strategies, the Guide recommends some of the best practices and successful strategies for improving content of meetings. Individuals surveyed on trust and knowledge about GDOT projects helped researchers identify common recurring themes and issues.

The recommendations made in Chapter 3 are aimed at improving participation in Public Meetings and Open Houses. The news media practitioners' interviews provided insights on how messages could be better geared for the news media to encourage the news media to use the information from GDOT in news stories. The team also identified the news values as indicated by media practitioners that communication has to have from GDOT to the news media in order for the media to want to use GDOT's information. Finally, systematic messaging strategies were presented. In addition, some measurements to determine the success of the strategies were recommended, along with tactics for early public involvement in the planning process and refinement of conventional practices.

The significance of this Guide is the provision of more consistent ways to present information in order to inform the public about GDOT's Work Program. This Guide includes tools, visual formats, along with strategies and plans for the agency to provide the public with effective, concise, and understandable messaging in user-friendly formats early in the project life cycle.

Key Words: GDOT Work Program, Open Houses, public input, news media, messaging strategies

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVE, AND WORK PLAN

1.1 Introduction and Background Information

"Delivering GDOT'S Work Program: Developing strategies for successful communication at Public Meetings and Open Houses to enhance the conceptual understanding and awareness of Need and Purpose, transportation deficiencies, and consequences of not implementing improvements associated with GDOT's proposed Work Program" is the GDOT research project contracted by a Georgia Southern University multidisciplinary research team.

GDOT has an important mission to maintain state roads and bridges, and other modes of transportation, such as rails and air safety planning, and overseas waterways, including intercoastal waterways. Despite being an organization that affects everyday life for most Georgians, many residents seem unaware of the benefits this agency provides. Many of the project messages by GDOT seem to get "lost in translation," and individuals may not understand the benefits of projects. Therefore, the interest in Open House formats may be improved and, perhaps, the understanding/trust of the GDOT's Work Program can be increased. This final report is identifying strategies and techniques based on best practices for getting the message regarding projects to the public proactively. It is also identifying clearly the benefits to the public and the impact on the public in language and formats that are easy for the public to understand and access. With regard to proactive messaging, the guide is encouraging a multifaceted approach that includes effective use of the local media, as well as a more grass roots approach involving community outreach and the use of established community organizations. This guide has laid important conclusions inferred from two surveys and research on best practices in

government-based transportation agencies with a specific focus on communication practices and a focus on the use of technology to improve communication. Also, a series of interviews were conducted by researchers to news media practitioners in the state about how GDOT could better prepare messages for state media to use.

The first survey was administered to individuals in order to understand their level of acceptance and knowledge of the GDOT and its Work Program. The second survey administered focused on the news media to understand how GDOT might better prepare messages for the news media in order to be presented to the public. The results of the research on best practices along with the results of the two surveys are combined to produce the present Conceptual Guide. It was customized for GDOT and outlines communications strategies to improve understanding and acceptance, and increase public participation and awareness of projects. The research team accomplished this endeavor and produced this Guide for GDOT by involving two civil engineers with experience in construction, a mass communications specialist, and an information technology specialist. The civil engineers understood the nature of the projects and the technical details of the projects that the GDOT was planning, designing, and trying to communicate to public. The mass communications specialist determined the best and most effective communication strategies for these projects, and the information technology specialist was involved in analyzing and determining the most effective communication strategies and the various technologies that can be used for transmitting information/messages.

1.2 Objective and Work Plan (description of tasks)

Objective of the research project – The research team established that the main objective for this project was *to determine the most effective strategies, methods, and formats to*

educate the public about the GDOT's Work Program using best practices for public involvement as identified by the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT), other state DOTs, and mass communication scholars.

The work plan established by Georgia Southern University research team was diligently carried out as outlined in the following main six tasks.

Task 1: Other state DOTs were examined to determine if there is information regarding best practices and strategies that these DOTs have found successful.

- Surveys were conducted with other state DOTs to determine what strategies worked best (as DOTs that have demonstrated success in public meetings or project messaging was identified).

- The results from examining and conducting these surveys with other state DOTs and the results of the interviews of the media (Task 4) were used to develop strategies for improving the content of the meetings, getting the public to the meetings, using outreach to get the project information to the community, and using the media to inform the public about the projects.

Task 2: In an effort to gauge individuals' level of trust and knowledge, the research team used a survey instrument for individuals to understand the level of trust they have in GDOT.

- Through the same survey instrument, the team also determined how much individuals understand the mission, the nature, and the benefits of GDOT projects

Task 3: On this particular task, strategies were investigated in order to improve the presentation and format of messages delivered to the public. In this sense:

- Team worked and looked into developing a plan for using the website and any

other new technology formats to help drive users to the site for additional information.

- Visual techniques were investigated for presenting information in user-friendly formats, such as 3D visualization, interactive displays, kiosks, and mapping using a Geographic Information System (extended to techniques used by other state DOTs).

- The team worked with VERG (Visual Engineering Resource Group) and GDOT in an attempt to understand how to drive more individuals to the website.

- Investigation of potential effective use of social media sites, visualizations available to the media and on the site, and a visual preference survey to be given to the public were proposed.

Task 4: A survey to news media practitioners was created and deployed. It was about how GDOT could better prepare messages for the media to use. Results of the survey have provided insights about how the media determines what issues are important enough to include on the media's agenda and what information GDOT could provide that might help convey the importance of the GDOT's message.

Task 5: Investigation on US DOT strategy with respect to best practices versus other state DOTs to determine their best practices as well as systematic messaging strategies was at focus for this task.

- The team proposed recommendations regarding which techniques are most effective given the nature of the project or meeting(s).

- The results of this task were combined with the results found in the other tasks to determine what combination of messaging techniques work best to build this

Conceptual Guide customized for GDOT.

- The final report (the guide) includes other strategies for getting messages regarding projects to the public including open houses and use of media formats. The guide also recommends timeline for messaging and provides a variety of measures that can be used to determine the successfulness of the strategies suggested including, but not limited to, increased number of attendees at meetings and events, positive results of surveys regarding meeting effectiveness, decreased number of complaints, increased positive mentions in the local and state news, and favorable comparison of the survey administered in Task 2 regarding individuals' knowledge of and trust in GDOT given by the researchers administering the survey again in the future by GDOT.

Task 6: Investigation of Open Houses held in conjunction with public meeting/hearing situations and use of shared resources for potential savings.

- Recommendations are made on the anticipated costs associated with refining conventional practices currently in use, as well as determining early in the planning process which project types/situations are candidates requiring proactive messaging.

The significance of this final report, Conceptual Public Guide, is that public input and understanding is integral to the work done by GDOT, as a lack of understanding can cause delays and increase costs. The body of this work is providing an actual guide that outlines better ways to present information in order to inform the public about the GDOT Work Program. The Guide is inclusive of tools, formats, and strategies for GDOT to provide the public with concise, understandable messages in user-friendly formats early

in the project life cycle. The support requested from GDOT by the research team during this project is outlined below:

- Facilitation and introduction of the research team to VERG and support with exchange of information

- Assistance in the collaboration with GDOT Information Technology (IT) personnel for website enhancements and improvements suggested in this final report

- Assistance on obtaining cost records of current conventional practices for Public meetings/hearings and Open Houses

- Providing information about the current practices for Public meetings/hearings and Open Houses as well as information about what has been successful and what has been not been successful

1.3 General Literature Review (critical to the main tasks)

Every state as well as the federal government has a department of transportation that oversees construction projects. The United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) provides a guide regarding how to involve the public in planning and project development called Public Involvement Techniques (http://www.planning.dot.gov/publicinvolvement/pi_documents/toc-foreword.asp). The contents of this US DOT document provide guidelines for involving the public in projects, making individuals feel like they make a difference, and keeping the public's attention for the duration of the project. The communication ideas include informing the public through outreach and by partnering with existing community organizations. The document also provides guidelines on how to involve people, how to get feedback from

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people for improving meetings, and the use of various techniques to enhance public participation.

According to the Pew Research Center, an erosion of public trust in government is seen with only 24% of individuals polled in October 2014 believed that those in Washington "would do what is right" (Dimcock, 2014; Doherty, 2015). However, although public trust remains elusive for the Federal government, many state governments and agencies are more trusted. In a 2013 poll by Pew Research Center, 57% of those polled indicated that they trusted their state government (Gao, 2013). Mass Communication scholars have determined that trust remains paramount overall in message acceptance in that more the people trust the messenger, more likely the people will pay attention to the message (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). However, trust is not the only issue to understand. Trust goes hand in hand with public knowledge of what government agencies do. When individuals understand what a government agency does, they have more trust. One way to determine the level of trust and knowledge of individuals about GDOT is to conduct a survey. Cappella and Jamieson have studied people's level of trust and level of knowledge for more than two decades, determining a way to survey individuals to gauge individuals' level of trust and knowledge in government organizations.

In Mass Communication, scholars use agenda setting and agenda building to determine how the media impact public opinion formation. Agenda setting is the idea that when the media talk about certain issues, those issues become salient in individuals' minds (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Roger & Dearing, 1996; McCombs, 2004). Sei-Hill, Scheufele, and Shanahan (2002) have shown that when the news media discuss issues,

such as transportation, individuals will cite transportation as a major issue facing their community. Therefore, GDOT wants to determine what best management practices it needs to reach out to the news media in general, in order to reach out to individuals, specifically regarding public meetings and projects. Agenda building deals with this in terms of how policy makers could shape the media agendas by placing certain issues in the forefront of the minds of journalists. The Pew Research Center has shown that individuals still rely on local news, including television news and newspapers, to get local information.

In 2015, the Pew Research Center studied three areas of the country, including Macon, and found that 9 in 10 people indicated that they followed their local news closely (Mitchell, 2015). So, if GDOT could successfully get on the media's agenda, the agency will reach the public. GDOT is competing for a limited amount of space in the media's agenda with other government agencies, as well as other issues. To understand how to better tailor messages to ensure that those messages make it into the media agenda, the team proposes surveying news media practitioners to determine why they choose to cover GDOT.

According to the US DOT Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration (http://www.planning.dot.gov/publicinvolvement/pi_documents/toc-foreword.asp), there are several techniques that can be used to promote greater participation and awareness of projects such as holding special events (i.e. transportation fairs), using new approaches in meetings (i.e. site visits and role playing), and finding new ways to communicate (i.e. visualization, teleconferencing, and interactive displays). In addition, the US DOT suggests getting more people involved through outreach and

involvement in community organizations. Greater interaction and participation will

promote awareness and understanding. Better understanding will promote acceptance.

CHAPTER 2. BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES OF STATE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION

The US DOT has provided each state transportation agency with a guide of strategies to involve the public in planning and project development. The guide suggests methods of informing the public through outreach, involving people through meetings, receiving public feedback, and enhancing public participation. In this GDOT research project, other state transportation agencies were compared and examined to determine their best practices and strategies.

2.1 Survey to Other State Departments of Transportation

Key employees from each state transportation agency were asked to participate in a survey to distinguish which public involvement practices worked best. The survey consisted of thirteen questions and was administered through an online analysis tool, called *Qualtrics*. The findings from this survey were used to recommend and improve the content of meetings, increase the public attendance at meetings, provide project information to the community through outreach, and inform the public about projects using the media.

2.2 Examination of Results

The survey (see Appendix A) had a response rate of 84%, with 56 total responses that represented 42 different state transportation agencies. The survey questions and summary of responses are provided below. Where appropriate, respondents could choose more than one answer. In addition, all questions had an option for "Other" where respondents could write in a response if it did not exist in the list of choices. The open ended "Other"

responses were classified as "relevant," and "non-relevant." The results from this analysis

can be found below by question; however, since more than one response can be chosen

from available answers, the percentages will not equal 100% for each question. The

response results are provided in tabular fashion as well as graphically with the category

of highest percentages presented first for ease of interpretation.

Q1. WHAT IS THE MOST EFFICIENT TECHNIQUE FOR THE PUBLIC TO FIND
INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR STATE DOT?

When asked about the most efficient technique for the public to find information, the

most frequent response was online. The use of social media was also mentioned in the

open-ended answers. A summary of these responses can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Efficient Techniques for Finding Information

Efficient Techniques for Finding Information	
Online	88%
In Person	7%
Other	5%
Hotlines	0%
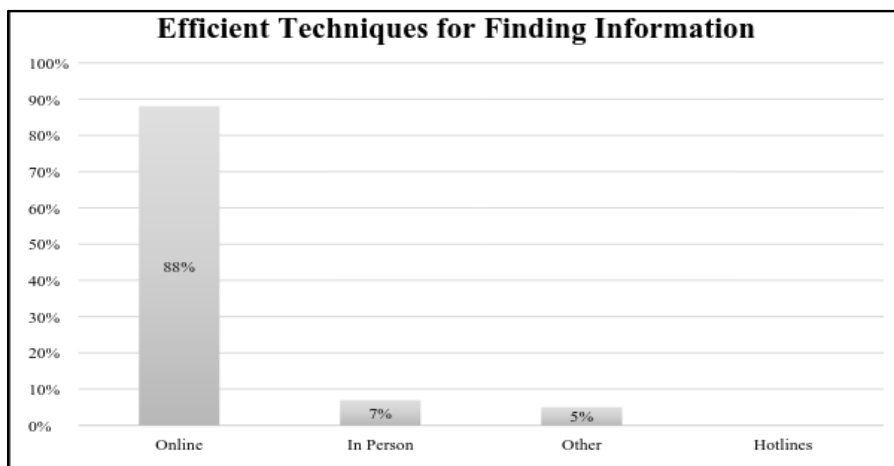
Figure 1 *Efficient Techniques for finding information*

Q2. WHAT PUBLIC AUDIENCES ARE MOST INVOLVED AND ACTIVE WITH YOUR DOT?

When asked about the most active and involved, the most frequent response was older audiences. The open-ended responses noted for this question were business/property owners, affected parties, elected officials, motorists, bicycle advocates, and special interest groups. A summary of the top three responses can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Most Involved and Active Public Audiences

Most Involved and Active Public Audiences	
Older Audiences	79%
Other	32%
Minority Groups	29%
Younger Audiences	23%
Ethnic Groups	21%
Low Income Groups	18%
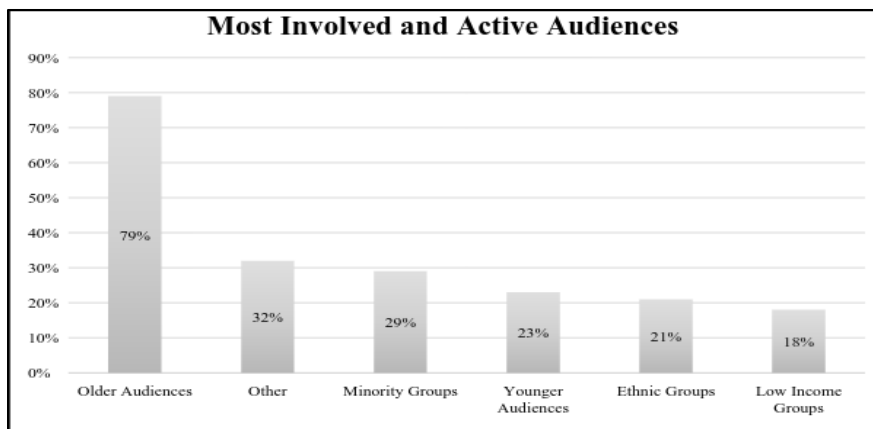
Figure 2 *Most Involved and Active Audiences*

Q3. WHAT TYPE OF "FACE-TO-FACE" PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES ARE EFFECTIVE FOR YOUR DOT?

When asked about effective involvement techniques, the most frequent response was public meetings. The open-ended responses noted for this question were business meetings, information tables, neighborhood events, project tours, one-on-one meetings, open houses, door-to-door interaction, district offices, social media, and online tools. A summary of the top three responses can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Effective "Face-to-Face" Techniques

Effective "Face-to-Face" Techniques	
Public Meetings/Hearings	98%
Other	25%
Speaker Bureaus	23%
Drop-in Centers	20%
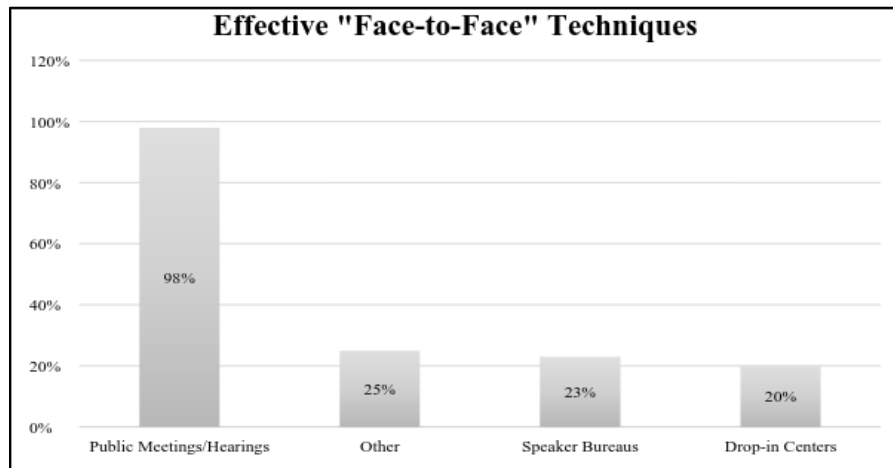
Figure 3 *Effective "Face-to-Face" Techniques*

Q4. WHAT VENUES HAVE BEEN USED EFFECTIVELY FOR HOLDING PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS?

When asked about effective venues, the most frequent response was schools. The open-ended responses noted for this question were churches, community centers, hotel

conference rooms, coffee shops, Fire/Legion Halls, and Americans with Disabilities Act

(ADA) Approved Facilities. A summary of all responses can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Effective Venues for Public Meetings/Hearings

Effective Venues for Public Meetings/Hearings	
Schools	87%
Government Agency Space	76%
Libraries	56%
Other	33%
Malls	15%
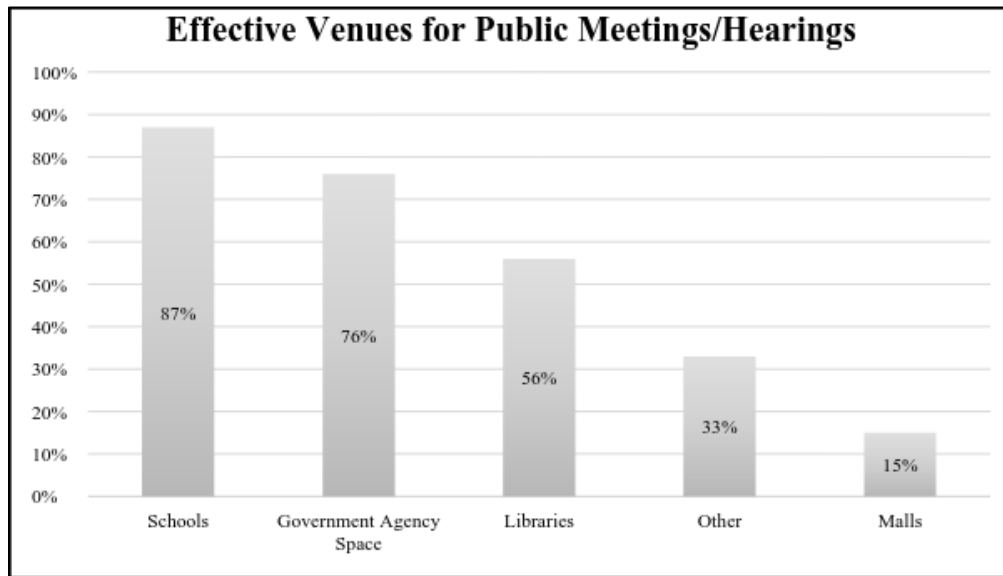
Figure 4 *Effective Venues for Public Meetings/Hearings*

Q5. WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE FORM OF SOCIAL MEDIA OR ONLINE
RESOURCE USED TO INTERACT WITH THE PUBLIC AND PROMOTE YOUR
DOT?

When asked about effective forms of social media or online resources, the most frequent

response was Twitter. The open-ended responses noted for this question were press

releases, Periscope, ISSUU (a free electronic publishing platform), Vimeo (a global video-sharing website), mysidewalk.com, YouTube, and state DOT homepages. A summary of the top three responses can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Effective Form of Social Media or Online Resource

Effective Form of Social Media or Online Resource	
Twitter	87%
Facebook	81%
Email Subscriptions	63%
Flickr	19%
Instagram	11%
Other	11%
Blog	7%
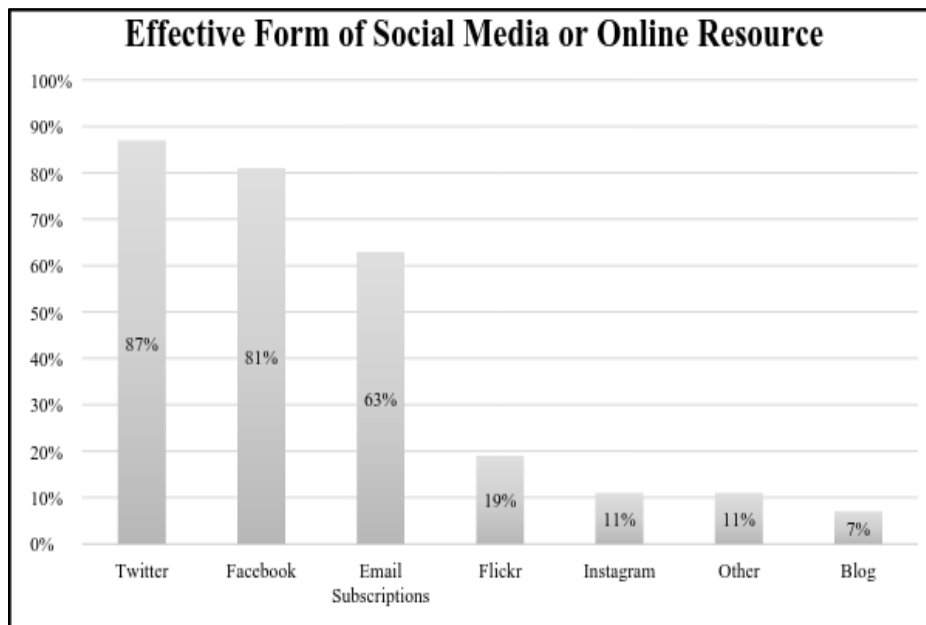
Figure 5 *Effective Form of Social Media or Online Resource*

Q6. WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT DOES YOUR DOT PROVIDE THAT IS MOST USED AND REQUESTED BY THE PUBLIC?

When asked about useful types of content, the most frequent response was the project work schedule. There were no open-ended responses noted for this question because even though given the option, a respondent chose "other," and did not specify. A summary of the top three responses can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. Most Requested Content by Public

Most Requested Content by Public	
Project Work Schedule	77%
DOT Contact Information for Each Project	61%
Selected Online Project Plans	45%
Selected Online Project Rationale	39%
Selected Online Project Written Documents	38%
Calendars of Related Public Meetings	36%
Project Cost Bid Information	32%
Other	13%
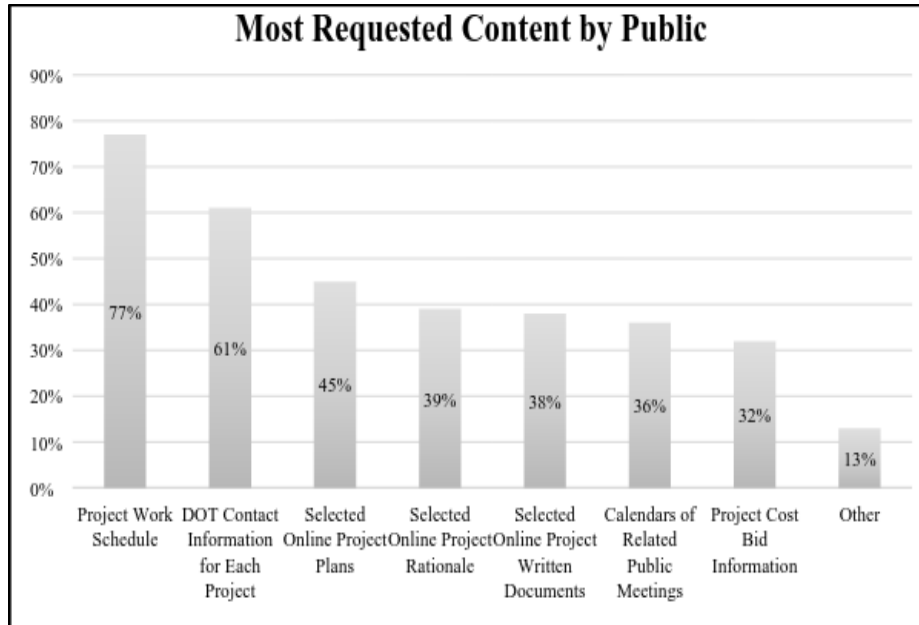
Figure 6 *Most Requested Content by Public*

Q7. WHAT TIME OF DAY IS THE MOST CONVENIENT AND BENEFICIAL FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/OUTREACH/INVOLVEMENT?

When asked about the most convenient time of day, the most frequent response was evenings. There were no open-ended responses noted for this question because even though given the option, a respondent chose "other," and did not specify. A summary of the top three responses can be found in Table 7.

Table 7. Most Convenient and Beneficial Times

Most Convenient and Beneficial Times	
Evenings	93%
Work/Business Days	48%
Afternoons	27%
Nights	16%
Weekends	13%
Others	13%
Mornings	7%
Lunch Time	5%
Holidays	4%
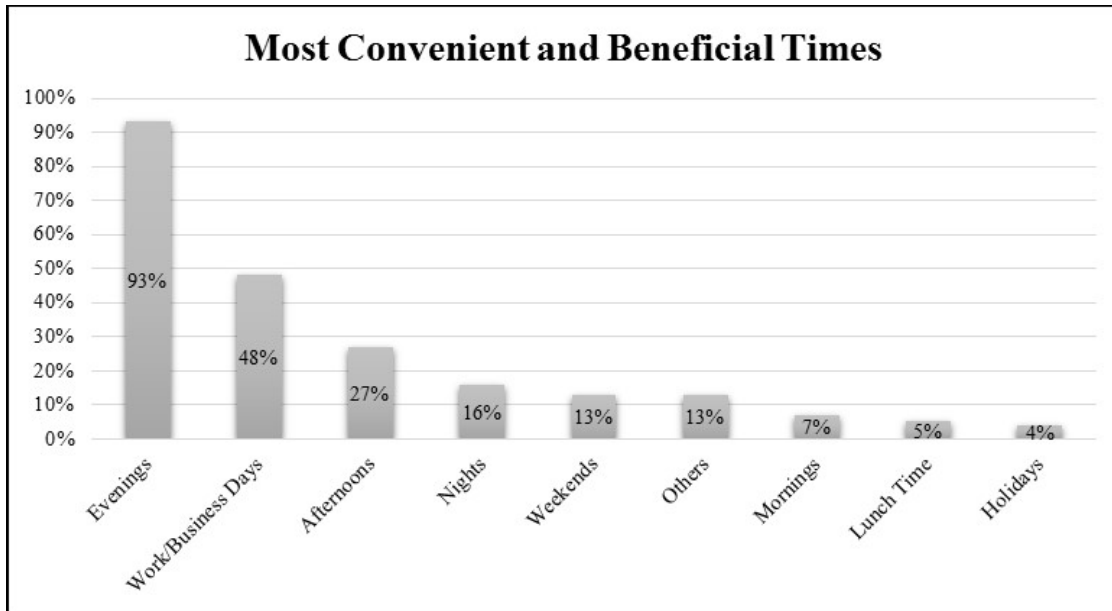
Figure 7 *Most Convenient and Beneficial Times*

Q8. WHAT TYPE OF ADVERTISEMENT ARE EFFECTIVE FOR YOUR DOT?

When asked about effective advertisements, the most frequent response was websites.

The open-ended responses noted for this question were radio, TV, billboards, trade

shows/fairs, postcards, portable message boards on highways, direct mailings, classified

advertisements, and front porch forums. A summary of the top three responses can be

found in Table 8.

Table 8. Effective Advertisements

Effective Advertisements	
Website	86%
Social Media	82%
Newspaper	71%
Newsletter	39%
Other	21%
Emails	13%
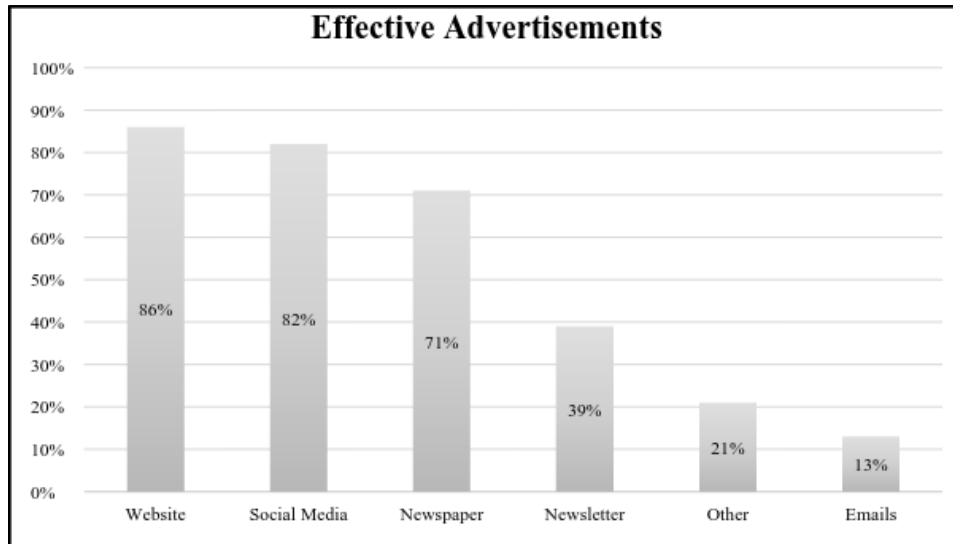
Figure 8 *Effective Advertisements*

Q9. WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE METHOD FOR OBTAINING PUBLIC FEEDBACK?

When asked about methods for obtaining feedback, the most frequent response was face-to-face. There were no open-ended responses noted for this question because even though given the option, a respondent chose "other," and did not specify. A summary of the top three responses can be found in Table 9.

Table 9. Effective Method for Obtaining Feedback

Effective Method for Obtaining Feedback	
Face-to-Face	82%
Online Feedback Forms	68%
Online Discussion Forums	32%
Other	18%
Hotlines	14%
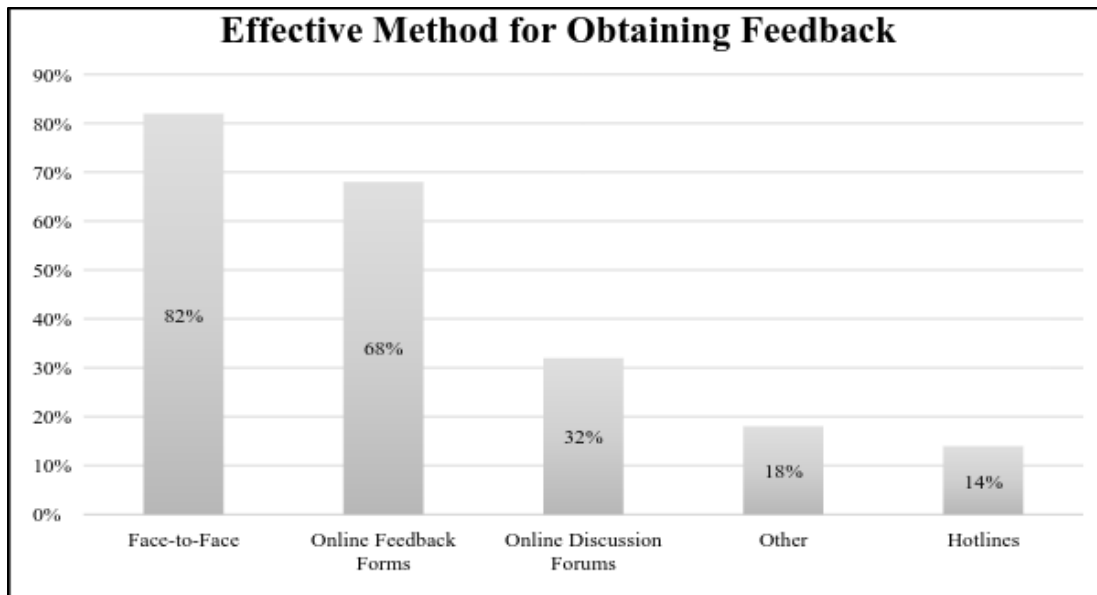
Figure 9 *Effective Method for Obtaining Feedback*

Q10. WHAT FORM OF FEEDBACK IS USED MOST FOR PUBLIC INPUT?

When asked about the most effective form of feedback, the most frequent response was

surveys. The open-ended responses noted for this question were emails, phone calls,

online comments and/or written/verbal comments from public meetings/hearings. A

summary of the top three responses can be found in Table 10.

Table 10. Most Used Forms of Feedback

Most Used Forms of Feedback	
Surveys	65%
Comment Boxes	65%
Other	33%
Focus Groups	26%
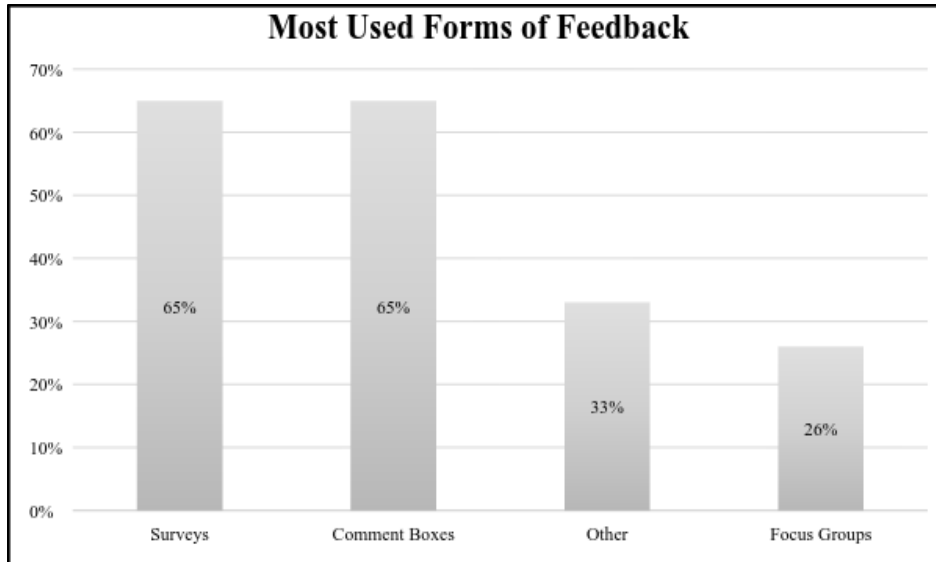
Figure 10 *Most Used Forms of Feedback*

Q11. WHEN DOES THE AGENCY ADDRESS THE PUBLIC'S FEEDBACK?

When asked about addressing feedback, the most frequent response was within a week.

The open-ended responses noted for this question were after or during the comment

period, and/or when the project documents were final. A summary of the top three

responses can be found in Table 11**.**

Table 11. Addressing Public Feedback

Addressing Public Feedback	
Within the Week	36%
Other	30%
Within the Month	18%
Within the Day	14%
Within the Year	2%
Never	0%
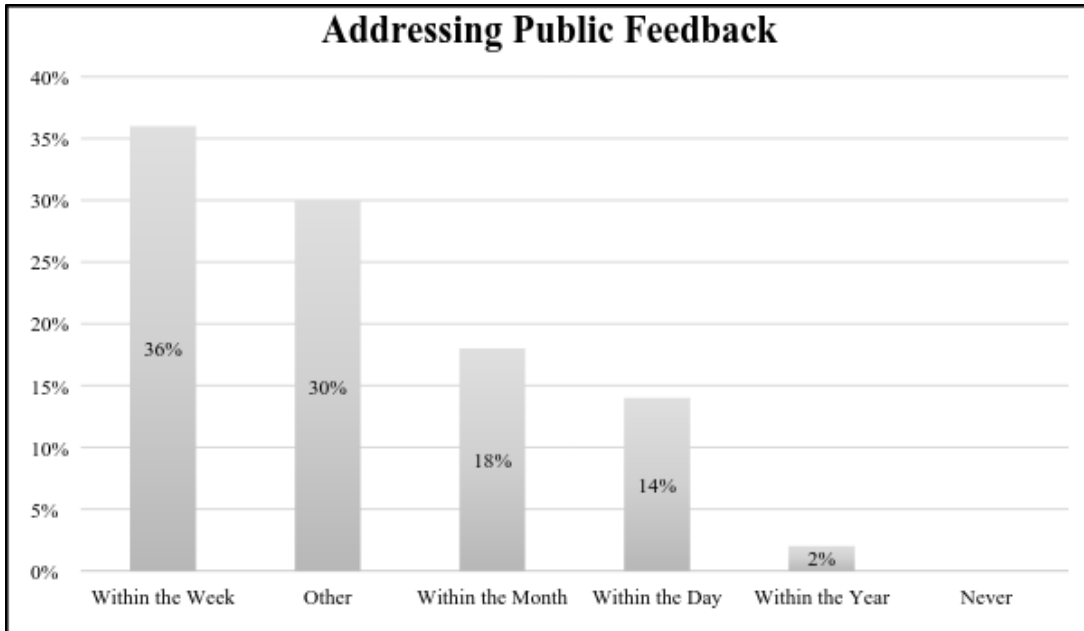
Figure 11 *Addressing Public Feedback*

Q12. WHAT "OTHER" ACTIVITIES HAS YOUR DOT USED TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC?

When asked about other activities, the most frequent response was transportation fairs.

The open-ended responses noted for this question were social media, mobile applications,

visualizations, presence at community events, virtual meetings, media appearances,

charrettes, phone calls, door-to-door interaction, and/or incentives. A summary of the top

three responses can be found in Table 12.

Table 12. Other Activities for Involvement

Other Activities for Involvement	
Transportation Fairs	64%
Other	43%
Games/Contests	31%
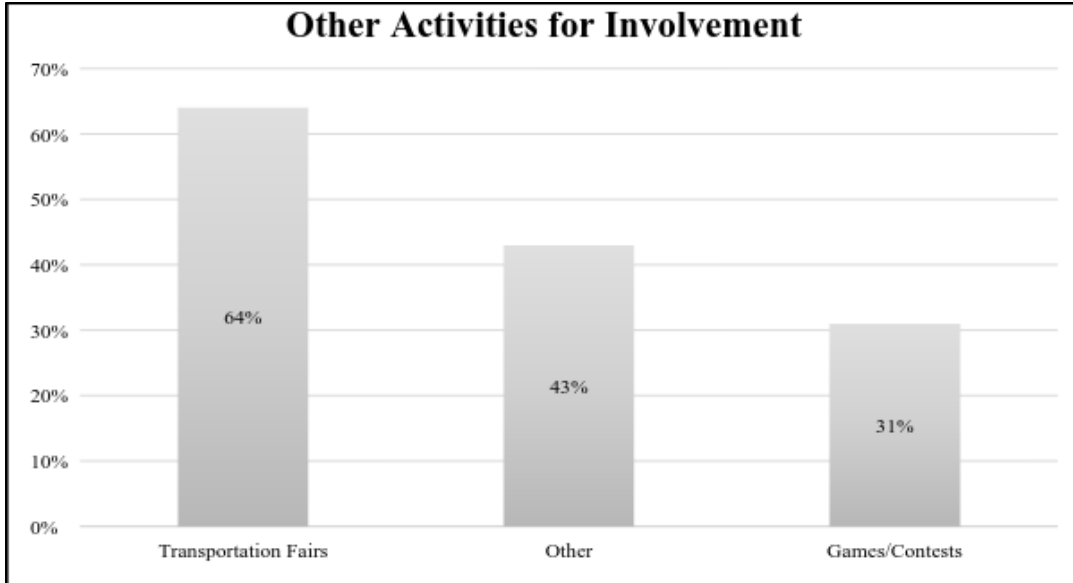
Figure 12 *Other Activities for Involvement*

Q13. DO YOU PROVIDE ANY INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC MEETINGS AND OPEN HOUSES FOR RECEIVING FEEDBACK FROM THE PUBLIC? IF SO, PLEASE SPECIFY WHAT TYPE OF INCENTIVES ARE USED AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE.

When asked if incentives are used to encourage participation, the most frequent response

was none. The open-ended responses noted for this question were gift cards,

refreshments, and/or safety related giveaways. A summary of the top responses can be

found in Table 13.

Table 13. Use of Incentives

Use of Incentives	
No Incentives	87%
Incentives	13%
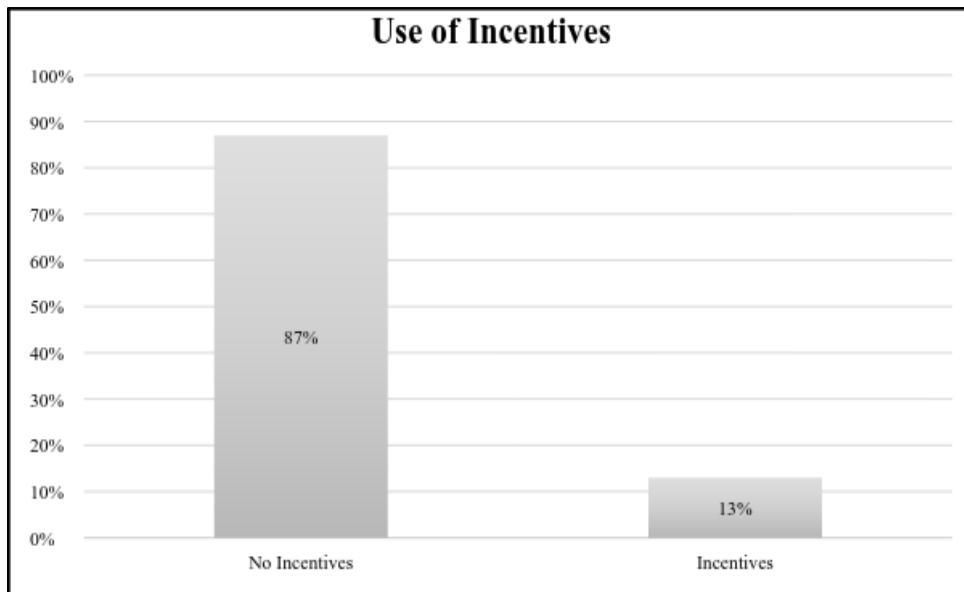
Figure 13 *Use of Incentives*

Summary of Findings

▪ Online is the most effective place for the public to find information

▪ Older audiences are the most involved and active in state DOTs

▪ Public open houses and hearings are the most effective type of "face-to-face" meeting

▪ Schools are the most effective venues for public meetings and hearings

▪ Twitter is the effective form of social media used to interact with the public and promote a DOT project

▪ Websites are the most effective advertisements

▪ Face-to-face is the most effective method for obtaining public feedback

▪ Transportation fairs are used the most as an "other" activity to involve the public

▪ No incentives are provided usually to encourage participation in public meetings and hearings

2.3 Recommendation of the Best Practices and Successful Strategies for Improving Content of Meetings

State transportation agencies across the country were observed in accordance to GDOT's public involvement ideas and techniques. The findings of best practices and successful strategies for improving content of meetings were classified in the following categories: *Online and Electronic Content; Face-to-Face Meetings, Tailoring Outreach Efforts; Communication, Feedback, and Concerns*. These recommendations could potentially improve the content of public meetings and create more opportunities to attract a greater public participation. Each recommendation includes at least one state transportation agency in parenthesis using the referred strategy:

Online and Electronic Content

- Obtain a slideshow or banner on transportation website that advertises the latest news. For example, the newest video on Vimeo, latest blog, feedback survey, road conditions, etc. (Arizona, Arkansas, California, and Maryland)
- Obtain a section on the transportation website for news, visuals, presentations, plans, videos, calendars, meeting minutes, news releases, and public meeting archives. (Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia)
- Obtain an interactive project map on the transportation website that provides alerts and updates. (Alaska, Colorado, and Iowa)
- Obtain a *Public Outreach Planner* on the transportation website for analyzing, quantifying, and tracking public outreach needs that leads to appropriate and

efficient project management. This tool allows the public to view information, ask questions, view budgets, take a quiz on project descriptions, etc. (Idaho)

▪ Obtain a section on the transportation website for the public to place informal requests of public records, transportation records, and publications. (Ohio)

▪ Obtain a layout for the transportation website that is simple, brightly colored, and not cluttered. (Colorado)

▪ Obtain a project hotline, website, or social media account that provides updates, contact information, location, specified details, etc. *Mysidewalk*, formerly called *Mindmixer,* is a site used by transportation agencies that gives the public and stakeholders convenient access to project information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A question can also be displayed on the project website to jumpstart the public's thought process (Alaska, Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, and North Carolina)

▪ Maintain an active blog that has at least ten articles a month on various transportation topics. (Arizona)

▪ Maintain an *Issuu* account to allow the public access to publications, magazines, etc. (Arkansas)

▪ Create a social media account for each district, or allow the public to navigate by district on the transportation website. (Alabama, California, and Nebraska)

▪ Create a *"Stay Connected"* page on a website that serves as an interactive hub to facilitate transportation news, events, video and photo galleries, and to promote information through social media platforms targeting all transportation stakeholders. (Illinois)

- Create a *"Study Website"* that updates the public with ongoing study information and developments, and publicize public meetings and opportunities to comment. (Massachusetts)

- Create a public notice page on the website that provides documents in regard to the notice and the date. This webpage allows the public to access the notices by "Most Viewed," "Most Recent," and "Upcoming Events/Deadlines". This keeps the public educated on current updates and changes. (Alaska)

Face-to-Face Meetings

- Host an informal public gathering, pop-up, or mobile meeting to promote an open exchange of information between department representatives, elected officials, interested citizens, and public interest groups on a project's development. This allows public input at the earliest stages of development by assessing issues and creating solutions without significantly extending the overall process. (District of Columbia, Missouri, and New Jersey)

- Host a speakers' bureau or community connections team that is available to attend neighborhood, business, and community organization meetings by request. An invitation can be sent to organizations and community groups to encourage requests for a speaker at their meetings. Trained officials can then speak knowledgeably about the project with community groups, listen to their feedback, answer questions, and relay information back to the project team. Also, this opportunity can be used to invite community/group leaders to serve on stakeholder committees, advisory groups, and project development teams. (Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and West Virginia)

- Host a drive-thru project display or open house by setting up a tent in the project area and hand out project information about upcoming construction, lane closures, or detours. (Florida)

- Hold a press conference during a popular event that will draw high-profile participants like elected officials, entertainment stars, or athletes. The news media offers an important and powerful means of communicating messages to broad audiences (Kentucky)

- Host an online meeting or webinar for audiences who are unable to meet at scheduled events. This can provide an overview of the existing plan, an opportunity to discuss proposed steps, and general information/highlights. This also allows the option for live streaming video. (Nevada, Michigan, Minnesota, and Washington)

Tailoring Outreach Efforts

- Tailor outreach efforts to a variety of people by communicating in alternative languages and making information accessible in different formats. (Delaware, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia)

- Tailor outreach efforts to younger audiences by engaging at schools. Engaging with students will educate and generate early involvement in transportation decision-making. By providing students with information, it is hoped that some of the materials will reach their parents. (Indiana, New Mexico, and Wisconsin)

- Form a focus group, task force, citizens advisory, or stakeholder committee to host meetings that capture representative and meaningful public input for project development. To identify these groups and/or stakeholders, the department can contact key community organizations and leaders that may be able to provide both

general and specific information about the makeup and concerns of the community. Gathering data about a community may help identify potential stakeholders. (Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming)

▪ Host an event at a different or more convenient time for the public, and/or a non-traditional location. Some non-traditional locations could be on a bus route, at the mall, etc. (Rhode Island)

▪ Obtain a tight focus at events for the public because an audience's attention begins to lessen after 20 or 30 minutes. Covering too many complex topics at these events can lead to an information overload. Provide a handout, fact sheet, or summary to reinforce the key points and give the participants a place to record their observations as well. (Pennsylvania)

▪ Use brainstorming and/or small group techniques as a facilitator to start freethinking and generate fresh ideas as a solution to a problem. The small group techniques could include seminars, breakout groups, workshops, roundtables, and community juries. (Kentucky, Nebraska, and South Dakota)

▪ Create an approachable atmosphere that attracts the public to events by offering incentives, contests, playing transportation-related music, or dressing the staff in bright t-shirts. (District of Columbia, and Kentucky)

▪ Attend and have a booth at local events (fairs, conferences, etc.) to distribute information to the public. (Kansas, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and Virginia)

▪ Campaign and advertise prior to events door-to-door, by posting flyers, phone calls, press/media releases, etc. (Florida)

Communication, Feedback, and Concerns

- Conduct a survey or poll to the public at events, by phone, or online to obtain methods of improvement. (Arizona, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Wisconsin)

- Obtain a toll-free, information, and comment line for the public to request information, provide comments, and discuss transportation issues with staff. (Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia)

- Obtain an outreach office to provide a one-stop resource to answer customers' transportation questions, to link customers with the appropriate offices and individuals at the department, to listen to customers input, and to facilitate customer participation in the department's decision-making process. (Maine)

- Obtain tablets, computers, or kiosks for the public to participate in surveys and provide feedback. (District of Columbia)

- Offer incentives or giveaways to the public to encourage feedback and participation. (District of Columbia, and California)

- Offer an app that provides the public with updates, notifications, and accurate real time info on transportation. (Colorado)

- Offer an email or text message subscription service to the public that provides automatic updates and notifications on new or changed information from the transportation agency. This service also promotes community programs, raises awareness of road projects, and informs the public about other DOT initiatives. GovDelivery is an email subscription that various agencies are using. (Illinois, Nebraska, Maryland, and Michigan)

CHAPTER 3. INDIVIDUALS' TRUST AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GEORGIA DOT

3.1 Background Information on Public Trust and Political Knowledge

Former Senator William Benton of Connecticut worried about the effect of political cynicism on society, adding "One of the gravest problems the American people face is the public cynicism about politics and government. We are paying a frightful cost for this unjustifiable criticism. Many descent – including many prominent – citizens shy away from assuming civic responsibilities because they mistakenly believe politics and government are generally corrupt and evil. Our entire society suffers," (as quoted by Agger et al.; 1961; p. 478). This comment was not made in recent years as individual's overall disdain has increased toward large institutions, such as the government, corporations, and the news media. Rather, this comment was made nearly 50 years ago, as scholars investigated the relationship among people's level of personal cynicism, their media use, and people's level of political efficacy and political cynicism.

According to the Pew Research Center, we have seen an erosion of public trust in government, with only 24% of individuals polled in October 2014 believed those in Washington "would do what is right." However, although public trust remains elusive for the Federal government, many state governments and agencies are more trusted. In a 2013 poll by Pew Research Center, 57% of those polled indicated they trusted their state government, an increase of 5% from a year earlier. Mass Communication scholars have determined that trust remains paramount overall in message acceptance in that the more people trust the messenger; the more likely people will pay attention to the message (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). However, trust is not the only issue to understand. Trust

goes hand in hand with public knowledge of what government agencies do. When individuals understand what a government agency does, they have more trust. One way to determine the level of trust and knowledge of individuals about GDOT is to conduct a survey. Cappella and Jamieson have studied people's level of trust and level of knowledge for more than two decades, determining a way to survey individuals to gauge individuals' level of trust and knowledge in government organizations.

3.2 Public Trust and Political Knowledge Considerations

Trust has been viewed as the bedrock of cooperation in society that can help reduce transaction costs and brings about a multitude of collective benefits, ranging from economic development and prosperity (Hyun-soo, 2014). Hyun-soo (2014) divided trust into two categories when analyzing politics, generalized trust, and institutional trust. Previous research suggests, "social (generalized) trust and political (institutional) trust are associated with the likelihood of getting involved in both informal and formal political activities" (p. 699). The focus of the Hyun-soo's (2014) study was to examine the degree to which trust in others can affect people's tendencies to participate in political activities, both formal (voting) and informal (signing a petition, boycotting, and joining a lawful demonstration). Earlier studies showed individuals who are more trusting also tend to be more active participants in informal political activities, and those with higher trust scores show higher probabilities of supporting democratic institutions and processes (Hyun-soo, 2014). "People who believe that in general most other people in their society can be trusted are also more inclined to have a positive view of their democratic institutions, to participate more in politics, and to be more active in civic organizations" (p. 699).

Garen & Clark (2015) researched how the simultaneous growth in government and deterioration in trust in government presents something of a paradox and questioned how a mistrusted institution can grow to become so large. To answer this question, they utilized key findings in economics, psychology, and experimental literatures that illustrated the interrelationships among trust in government, productivity, and government growth. An outcome from Garen and Clark's (2015) modeling is the mutual dependence of the public's mistrust in government. "It seems straightforward that trust in government is a declining function of government actions that generate special interests" (p. 550). While trust is important for government to function, Garen and Clark (2015) note the trust of the public is earned by good performance of the government, and they model this simultaneous relationship of how trust enables government action, but government action affects the degree of trust, a mutual relationship. They found through their research that many public policy analysts have lacked the idea that "actions and nature of government are likely to be important in inducing cooperative attitudes and other aspects of social capital" (p. 575). Basically, many parts of the nature of government can be overlooked when comparing to specifics such as trust of the people.

Otto & Maier (2016) look at the personalization of politics, a central feature of democratic politics in the twenty-first century. "The personalization hypothesis encompasses two propositions (1) The focus of attention is changing from parties, institutions and issues to people, that is, individual actors become more relevant when compared to political issues and political institutions and (2) non-political traits, private life of and personal information about political actors have become more relevant than their professional competence and performance; this shift has been called 'privatization'"

(p. 22-23). Otto & Maier (2016) note that attitudes towards political institutions and the political system are seen to be more stable than trust in politicians. Trust towards political institutions is most associated with the broader political and economic situation in a country. Support of the political system or democratic principles is conceptualized as rather stable. "It is easy to think of somebody distrusting individual politicians or politicians in general, or even being dissatisfied with the functioning of certain political institutions, but still supporting and trusting fundamental principles of democracy and the political system" (p. 25).

To summarize, Otto & Maier (2016) wanted to investigate how the relationship between the trustworthiness of the information and effects on trust in politicians is structured. Otto & Maier (2016) found that general trust had a significant impact on trust in politicians. An interesting discovery was the fact that participants with low levels of general trust were not affected by personalized news exposure regardless of the form of treatment. Meaning that they had their opinion and media did not change it in anyway. Information about politicians through the media did not affect these people because they predispositioned to not feel connected to the government. The trust in politicians of those with higher levels of general trust came to be more interested by information through media. These people also tend to have a higher sense of trust in that they trust their government knows what it's doing, unlike the latter, who can be described as having political cynicism.

Political cynicism, as used by Dancey (2012), is conceptualized as one component of political trust, which can be defined as a global affective orientation toward government that is an evaluation of whether government outputs meet citizens'

expectations. Dancey (2012) describes these broad definitions of political trust to encapsulate attitudes toward the numerous component parts of government, including institutions and incumbent authorities, as well as the different criteria individuals use to evaluate government's component parts, such as responsiveness, competence, and integrity. The study contributes to the literature on the importance of citizens' dissatisfaction with government. Cynicism towards an elected official drives the main questions behind Dancey's (2012) research, which was tested by asking a group of participants' questions about Watergate scandal and House Bank scandal. The analyses of participants' reactions to both scandals indicate that a citizen's impressions of politicians' integrity carry political consequences. "Although there is no evidence that more cynical individuals seek out more information about scandals, cynics do appear more likely to interpret ambiguous information in a way that negatively reflects on the actors involved" (p. 421).

The media is believed to be strongly connected to an individual's trust in government. The implications of media commercialization for political culture have long captured the attention of scholars and media commentators (Ariely, 2015). The news media's focus on intrigues, personal details and scandals in order to increase ratings is regarded by many people as a major contributor to political cynicism. Exposure to dramatic entertainment rather than hard news facts leads citizens to view politics via the lens of entertainment. Like Otto & Maier, Ariely (2015) noticed that in addition to differences in news content, studies have also shown that the effect of media environments on a citizen's political knowledge differs across countries. People who watch news on public channels are more politically involved, effective, attentive, and

knowledgeable than those who watch news on commercial channels. Citizens typically

form opinions and make voting choices in the absence of important policy-relevant

information (Reedy, Wells, & Gastil, 2014). Ariely (2015) looked into countries like

Britain, Denmark and Spain and their mix of news coverage, both dramatic and facts.

"While exposure to privatized news focusing on scandals and the personal details of

politicians' lives increases political cynicism, exposure to personalized news - i.e., human

interest stories and emotionalization - decreases political cynicism" (p. 442-443).

Hanson, Haridakis, Cunningham, Sharma, & Ponder (2010) noted similar findings

when other platforms like television and social networks Myspace, YouTube, and

Facebook are used to collect and gain information pertaining to government officials and

functionality. "The media's relationship to political cynicism has been well documented.

As one might expect, much of the research has focused on television, particularly on the

effects of news and negative political advertising" (p. 588). Ariely (2015) concluded the

research finding that this study supports the validity of such worries in the sphere of

political trust. "While political trust is not a critical attitude towards politics it is not in

and of itself problematic, the findings imply that media commercialization is related to

this aspect of political culture across contexts. Media environments afford exposure to

information and frames that shape citizen orientations towards politics. If the

commercialization of media political coverage reduces political trust, we must ponder the

consequences of this fact for political culture in the long run" (p. 451).

Velasquez & LaRose (2015) research similar methods of social media use and

how generations differ by how they get their information, affecting their political

efficacy. As much as the concerns about newspaper decline, new media brings new opportunities for connectivity (Gaddie, R., & Gaddie, K., 2014).

For many members of student activist groups social media have become central to coordinate political actions, express political views, and for issue-oriented advocacy (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Again, Reichert (2016) notes that people who are more knowledgeable in the political realm and who feel more efficacious to influence political decisions are more politically active. "Although political knowledge may be considered a significant quality of politically active and involved citizens, most people's knowledge about politics appears insufficient to meet the standards of a 'competent citizen'" (p. 221). Reichert (2016) defines the concept of efficacy in that self-efficacy relies on the distinction between "outcome expectations"—"a person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to certain outcomes"—and "efficacy expectations"—"the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes" (p. 221).

Reichert (2016) notes that it is obvious that political knowledge, internal political efficacy and political participation must be correlated with each other, and that research suggests political knowledge and efficacy are of greater predictive value for explaining political participation than vice versa. Political knowledge "promotes political participation" and the same applies to internal political efficacy, as many studies report a positive impact of political efficacy on a range of political activities (Reichert, 2016). Reichert (2016) found that "a citizen's internal political efficacy seemed to be more important with regard to conventional political participation compared with their willingness to participate" (p. 233, direct quote). This was also found to be true from research by Osborne, Yogeeswaran, & Sibley (2015) in that perception of political

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efficacy had countervailing relationships with participants' support for the political mobilization of their group. In the research process itself, believing that one can change the system was positively associated with participants' support for the political mobilization of Maori. On the other hand, political efficacy was indirectly associated with a decrease in participants' political mobilization support because they felt society was not just; therefore, they felt their political mobilization would not have any effect on making society better (Osborne, Yogeeswaran, & Sibley, 2015).

The research by Reichert (2016) specifically shows that political knowledge is rather subsidiary compared with perceived behavioral control, meaning that internal political efficacy is more important in the prediction of political behavior. "Political knowledge affected political participation through internal political efficacy, and it primarily affected behavioral intentions. Although accurate political knowledge may not always be necessary, nor is it sufficient, to predict behavior it contributes to decisions that conform with an individual's preferences and political attitudes" (p.233, direct quote).

We see knowledge as a resource that an individual draws on when making the decision to participate in politics (Ondercin, H. L., & Jones-White, 2011). One interpretation of prior political knowledge research is that many, if not most, citizens are not politically competent, and that this is especially true of women, minorities, and non-elites (Shaker, 2012). Competition and conflict lead young men to become more politically informed. This does not hold true for young women, who gain the greatest political knowledge in realms where political consensus is more common than conflict. Talking with parents about politics is more likely to lead to information gains among young women than young men (Wolak & McDevitt, 2011). Bell (2016) notes that there

are decades-old and growing bodies of scholarship that show a legal cynicism, or distrust of the law and legal authorities, among African Americans.

Individuals need political information on which to base their various participatory decisions and acts, and knowledge can also reflect a psychological orientation when it comes to politics. If an individual lacks a positive psychological orientation toward politics that in turn lowers his or her political knowledge, the individual will be less likely to participate in politics (Ondercin, H. L., & Jones-White, 2011). "Political knowledge not only influences the likelihood of participating in politics, but also influences an individual's attitudes and ability to participate effectively" (p. 690). Hollander (2014) noted that recall and recognition are best understood as analogous to school exams. Recognition resembles a multiple-choice question in which a student is cued by several response alternatives. Recall resembles the traditional short-answer question, what a respondent is able to ''summon to mind'' based on limited help from the question itself (Hollander, 2014).

3.3 Survey to Determine Public Involvement

Because of the integral work GDOT does in the state of Georgia, officials would like to get residents of Georgia invested in projects being done by GDOT. Officials at GDOT wished to determine what factors made individuals interested in attending public meetings offered by GDOT related to planned projects. More importantly, GDOT officials wanted to know why individuals failed to attend public meetings. Scholars have found that Public Trust and Political Knowledge are often related to an individual's level of participation in any political process. Therefore, we hypothesize that Public Trust and Political Knowledge influence individuals' level of participation in public meetings. To

test our hypothesis, we developed a survey for residents in Georgia to determine their level of Public Trust using the constructs of Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy (see Appendix B). The survey also tests the public's Political Knowledge about GDOT. We compared their levels of Trust and Knowledge with their feelings toward public meetings offered by GDOT, as well as asked individuals directly what GDOT can do to make individuals more likely to participate in the political process, namely attend public meetings and comment on projects being done by the state agency.

The next sections discuss the constructs of Political Trust and Public Knowledge in more detail and relate these constructs to the development of the survey instrument. This is followed by a discussion of the development of the Political Knowledge and demographic questions on the survey. Finally, the results and key findings are presented in the last sections.

Public Trust

Scholars have gauged the concept of Public Trust using the constructs of Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy. Since we are looking at participation in the political process namely through public meetings, we decided to look at how individuals felt about GDOT in terms of Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy. In order to compare GDOT to other government entities, we decided to gauge individuals' Public Trust of a federal agency similar to GDOT, the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT). Scholars have shown that individuals have increased Public Trust in state agencies as compared to federal agencies, so we decided to compare the similar agencies to see if we had similar results. If we have similar results, our findings follow what other scholars have found that individuals have decreased Public Trust in federal agencies as compared

to state agencies. However, if our findings indicate that individuals have less Public Trust in GDOT as compared to US DOT, our findings could indicate that the GDOT might have issues with Public Trust, which could be impacting participation in public meetings.

Scholars have determined Public Trust often is created by constructs such as Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy. Political Cynicism is how cynical someone might feel toward a government entity or big business. Political Efficacy is how much people feel they have a say in how their government is run. We used statements in our survey instrument used by other scholars that test the constructs of Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy. These statements have been pre-tested by other scholars, and used in other surveys, including surveys by the Pew Research Center and American National Election Studies. We had participants gauge their agreement to statements based on a 5-point scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree."

We had seven statements to gauge Political Cynicism and three statements related to Political Efficacy. Participants were asked to assess their overall agreement or disagreement with all statements on the 5-point scale for both US DOT and GDOT. Statements for Political Cynicism were:

(1) The US DOT/GDOT is trustworthy;

(2) The US DOT/GDOT is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves;

(3) When something is run by the US DOT/GDOT, it is usually inefficient and wasteful;

(4) I think that the US DOT/GDOT does not listen to people like me;

(5) The US DOT/GDOT has lost touch with people;

(6) The US DOT/GDOT is really run for the benefit of all the people; and

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(7) The US DOT/GDOT is too powerful.

Statements for Political Efficacy were:

(1) At times, the US DOT/GDOT can be so complex that people like me don't

understand what is going on;

(2) People like me don't have a say in what the US DOT/GDOT does; and

(3) I think that I am better informed about the US DOT/GDOT than others.

Political Knowledge

Scholars have shown that Political Knowledge often influences individuals' level of political participation in that the less individuals know about government, the less likely they are to involve themselves in the political process. In GDOT's case, we thought that the less individuals knew about GDOT's responsibilities, the less likely individuals would be to get involved in the political process, specifically being involved in public meetings that GDOT has for projects. To assess Political Knowledge, we asked participants seven close-ended questions to assess individuals' knowledge regarding GDOT. The seven questions were:

(1) The Georgia Department of Transportation oversees other modes of

transportation besides roads, including providing planning and financial

support for other modes of transportation such as rail transit, airports and air

safety planning.

(2) Although we do not have a lot of snow, we do have snowstorms every once

in a while. What agency oversees snow removal on city roads?

(3) Although we do not have a lot of snow, we do have snowstorms every once

in a while. What agency oversees snow removal on county roads?

(4) Although we do not have a lot of snow, we do have snowstorms every once in a while. What agency oversees snow removal on state roads?

(5) Although we do not have a lot of snow, we do have snowstorms every once in a while. What agency oversees snow removal on the interstates?

(6) The toll road in Georgia is _____.

(7) The Georgia Department of Transportation has a cell number for motorists to call to get up to the minute road conditions. Do you know what the number for this service is? (Answers: True; City; County; GDOT; GDOT; I-85; 511).

We coded each response as either correct or incorrect based on individuals' answers. We then added the number of correct responses and divided by the total number of questions to get one measure of Political Knowledge, the percent of questions that an individual respondent answered correctly.

Public Meetings

GDOT is integral to everyday life of residents in Georgia. The state agency does many construction projects throughout the state to improve our roadways for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. GDOT hosts public meetings to explain these projects to the public, as well as to receive feedback on the projects. However, according to GDOT, some of the public meetings have not been well-attended. As GDOT cares a great deal about public opinion and feedback, it charged this research team with helping GDOT improve attendance at these meetings. To understand public perceptions about these meetings, we asked residents several open-ended and close-ended questions about their overall interest in attending public meetings being held by GDOT. We used the responses

to determine why individuals might have attended meetings, and more importantly, why they failed to attend meetings.

We asked individuals specifically if they had attended a public meeting held by GDOT regarding one of the many important projects the state agency does across the region. We also asked individuals which meeting they attended, as well as if they would be willing to go online to post comments or give feedback regarding potential projects being done by GDOT. If individuals indicated they had not attended a meeting held by GDOT, we asked them specifically why they chose not to attend. We also asked them (1) What could the Georgia Department of Transportation do to make you want to attend its Open Houses on important projects in your area?; and (2) Is there any other things that the Georgia Department of Transportation can do to get you interested in attending Open Houses?

Sampling Method and Demographic Results

For the survey, we used a snowballing sample of individuals to reach residents in the state of Georgia. Since we are on a college campus, we used organizations and classes at Georgia Southern University to reach out to residents that were also students. We then asked our students to reach out to their parents and ask them to respond to reach a demographic other than students and because older participants often are more involved in the political process than younger individuals. The method worked as our average age for respondents was 48 years old. We had one issue though with the sample. We attempted to get different races to take the survey by asking students of different races to reach out to their church groups and communities. However, most of the respondents, 88

percent, listed themselves as Caucasian, with 5 percent listing themselves as African American.

Normally, survey respondents have a tendency to be more female. In fact, scholars attempt to over sample male participants because of this issue. We did not have this problem. In fact, more men took the survey than women. We had 54 percent of the respondents indicating they are male versus 45 percent of the respondents listing they are female. Our respondents had higher socioeconomic status as measured by the level of education and income versus the state average; however, our survey was done online and more individuals who complete surveys online do have higher socioeconomic status. We had more respondents that were college educated or had completed graduate work. We had 37 percent of the respondents complete some college and 40 percent complete graduate work. Our respondents also had a higher income level, with 32 percent of the respondents indicating they made $100,000 to $200,000 a year, versus 28 percent who indicated they made less than $100,000 a year. Tables 14, 15 and 16 provide a summary of the ethnicity, income and education level of respondents.

Table 14. Ethnicity of Respondents

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
African American	16	4.9
American Indian	1	0.3
Asian	3	0.9
Caucasian	285	88
Hispanic	5	1.5
Other	10	3.1

Table 15. Income of Respondents

Income	Frequency	Percent
<30K	35	10.8
30K-75K	46	14.2
75K-100K	45	13.9
100K-200K	105	32.4
>200K	70	21.6

Table 16. Education Level of Respondents

Education	Frequency	Percent
High School	7	2.2
Some College	66	20.4
College Grad	121	37.3
Graduate Work	130	40.1

The largest percentage of respondents (41%) considered themselves Republican. Of the remaining respondents, 24% considered themselves Independent, and 20% considered themselves Democrats. We feel this is consistent with the political affiliation of the state of Georgia. Table 17 summarizes the political affiliation of respondents.

Table 17. Political Affiliation of Respondents

Political Affiliation	Frequency	Percent
Republican	132	40.7
Independent	78	24.1
Democrat	67	20.7
Liberal	7	2.2
Green	3	0.9
Other	24	7.4

We also asked several questions regarding media use to determine where individuals get their information. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated they turned to news online, with 51% of the respondents using the Internet as a news source. Respondents also indicated that they turned to their local news organizations and national

news organizations through the Internet, rather than typical sources. Twenty percent of

respondents indicated that they watch TV for news, while only 13% indicated they read a

newspaper. Survey respondents also indicated that they used the Internet 1 to 3 hours per

day (31%). Internet use is a method that GDOT could use to reach the public. Tables 18

and 19 summarize news sources and internet usage of respondents.

Table 18. News Sources of Respondents

News Source	Frequency	Percent
Internet	165	50.9
Television	64	19.8
Newspapers	41	12.7
Radio	32	9.9
Magazines	2	0.6
Other	18	5.6

Table 19. Respondents' Internet Usage (hours per day)

Internet Usage (hrs. per day)	Frequency	Percent
<1 hour	27	8.3
1-3 hours	149	46.0
3-7 hours	110	34.0
>7 hours	32	9.9

3.4 Public Trust Findings

Analysis Plan

We asked 10 questions regarding the concept of Public Trust by focusing on two

constructs of the concept, Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy. We asked the

questions for both GDOT and US DOT because research has shown that state agencies

often are more trusted than federal agencies. We wanted to see if the same could be said

for GDOT, a state agency that works hard to help the residents of Georgia. The questions

along with the construct to which they belong can be found in Table 20. We first

analyzed each of the ten questions separately to determine if there was a difference between how individuals viewed GDOT versus the US DOT. We then created the constructs of Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy by combining the 7 questions that created the construct of cynicism and the 3 questions that created the construct of efficacy (see Table 20). We compared the US DOT and GDOT on the transformed constructs. We then compared GDOT to the hypothetical mean (3 on a scale of 1 to 5) that we should have seen if individuals felt both positive and negative toward the government agency.

Prior to analysis, all of the statements of Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy were recoded so the higher number meant participants were more positive toward the federal and state agency.

Table 20. Survey Questions on Public Trust

Question	Construct	Abbreviation
1. At times, the US DOT/GDOT can be so complex that people like me don't understand what is going on.	Political Efficacy	Q1 complex
2. The US DOT/GDOT is trustworthy.	Political Cynicism	Q2 trustworthy
3. People like me don't have a say in what the US DOT/GDOT does.	Political Efficacy	Q3 no say
4. I think that I am better informed about the US DOT/GDOT than others.	Political Efficacy	Q4 informed
5. The US DOT/GDOT is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.	Political Cynicism	Q5 doesn't listen
6. When something is run by the US DOT/GDOT, it is usually inefficient and wasteful.	Political Cynicism	Q6 big interests
7. I think that the US DOT/GDOT does not listen to people like me.	Political Cynicism	Q7 lost touch
8. The US DOT/GDOT has lost touch with people.	Political Cynicism	Q8 inefficient
9. The US DOT/GDOT is really run for the benefit of all the people.	Political Cynicism	Q9 all people
10. The US DOT/GDOT is too powerful.	Political Cynicism	Q10 powerful

Results

When looking at the individual measures of Public Trust (Table 21), we found that individuals were more positive toward GDOT than the US DOT on all measures that were statistically significant (questions 1 – 5) except for our trustworthiness measure (Q2 trustworthy). When we asked individuals whether they felt the government agencies were trustworthy, we found that the US DOT was considered more trustworthy (*M* = 3.00, *SD* = .86) than GDOT, *M* = 3.00, *SD* = .89, *t* (329) = -2.14, *p* < .05, as the t-statistic was negative. We thought about why that might be the case. GDOT is more visible than the US DOT. The findings might relate to the fact that GDOT is more visible than its federal counterpart. When individuals are out on the roadways and see road construction, they often think of the state agency rather than the federal government. Individuals also might be confused about what the US DOT does in that US DOT is not as visible as GDOT; therefore, individuals have more trust because they do not "see" the US DOT. US DOT is not a federal agency that individuals often think about when considering the federal government. They might not understand what the federal agency does; therefore, they feel they can trust it more as compared to the state agency. However, this was the only measure where we saw individuals feel more positive toward the federal government as compared to the state government.

With all the remaining 4 measures that were significant, individuals felt more positive toward GDOT than the US DOT (see Table 21) as the t-statistic was positive. Of those that were significant, individuals felt that the US DOT (*M* = 2.19, *SD* = .98) was more complex overall than GDOT (Q1 complex), *M* = 2.31, *SD* = 1.05, *t* (323) = 2.94, *p* < .01. In other words, individuals felt that GDOT was less complex of a government

agency than the US DOT. The findings were also significant in that Individuals felt that

they had no say (Q3 no say) in what the US DOT ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.027$) did as

compared to GDOT, $M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.08$, $t\,(323) = 5.03$, $p < 0.001$. In other words,

GDOT is seen as reaching out to individuals more to get feedback on projects; therefore,

individuals feel they have a say in how the state organization is run. Significant findings

also indicated that individuals felt they were better informed (Q4 informed) on what

GDOT ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.02$) was doing as compared to the US DOT, $M = 2.90$, $SD =$

1.01, $t\,(320) = 4.25$, $p < 0.001$. In other words, individuals felt that GDOT informed them

better about projects. There were significant findings for individuals' feeling that GDOT

($M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.08$) listened to them more (Q5 doesn't listen) as compared to the US

DOT, $M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.00$, $t\,(323) = 3.19$, $p < .01$. In other words, GDOT is seen as

listening to individuals more. This is most likely due to the great effort GDOT takes to

reach out to individuals as compared to the US DOT.

Additionally, one measure was trending toward significance ($p < 0.10$), in that

individuals felt the US DOT ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.04$) was more inefficient and wasteful

than GDOT (Q8 inefficient), $M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.3$, $t\,(323) = 1.74$, $p = .082$. Therefore,

GDOT is seen as being more efficient than the federal agency.

Since the questions related specifically to the constructs of Political Cynicism and

Political Efficacy, we combined the 7 questions into the construct of Political Cynicism

and the 3 questions into the construct of Political Efficacy (see Table 20). We then

compared the state agency with the federal agency. When we analyzed the findings

(Table 22), we found that we had significant findings related to Political Efficacy, but not

for the Political Cynicism construct. Our significant findings indicated that individuals

felt they understood GDOT ($M = 2.58$, $SD = .72$) more than the US DOT, $M = 2.41$, $SD = .69$, t (323) $= 5.89$, $p < 0.001$. In other words, individuals feel they understand and feel connected more to the GDOT as compared to the federal agency. Although it was not significant, the findings for the Political Cynicism construct were important from the standpoint that individuals felt just as cynical toward the US DOT as compared to the GDOT. We should have seen GDOT having less cynicism from the public based on what previous scholars have found.

Table 21. t-tests Comparing Public Trust for GDOT versus US DOT

Question	Construct	t-statistic	p-value
Q1 complex	Political Efficacy	2.936	**.004
Q2 trustworthy	Political Cynicism	-2.144	*.033
Q3 no say	Political Efficacy	5.030	**.000
Q4 informed	Political Efficacy	4.246	**.000
Q5 doesn't listen	Political Cynicism	3.189	**.002
Q6 big interests	Political Cynicism	-0.939	.348
Q7 lost touch	Political Cynicism	0.372	.710
Q8 inefficient	Political Cynicism	1.744	.082
Q9 all people	Political Cynicism	-1.336	.183
Q10 powerful	Political Cynicism	-0.257	.798

*Significance at 5%, ** Significance at 1%

Table 22. t-tests Comparing Political Efficacy and Political Cynicism for GDOT versus US DOT

Construct	t-statistic	p-value
Political Efficacy	5.892	**.000
Political Cynicism	0.140	.889

*Significance at 5%, ** Significance at 1%

We then chose the hypothetical mean of 3, as it is the mean of our scale of 1 to 5, in order to test whether individuals felt more negative toward GDOT (negative t-statistic) as compared to what we should have seen if individuals felt both positive and negative toward the state agency (hypothetical mean of 3). Our significant findings, shown in Table 23, indicated that individuals were more negative on both the construct of Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy. In other words, individuals felt more cynical toward GDOT as compared to the hypothetical mean of 3, which represents both positive and negative feelings toward the state agency, $M = 2.64$, $SD = .71$, $t(323) = -9.07$, $p < 0.001$. We also found that even though individuals felt they might have understood the state agency more than the federal agency, they still felt like their voice counted less with GDOT as compared to the hypothetical mean, $M = 2.56$, $SD = .72$, $t(323) = -10.55$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 23. t-tests Comparing Political Efficacy and Political Cynicism for GDOT versus Hypothetical Mean of 3

Construct	t-statistic	p-value
Political Efficacy	-10.548	**.000
Political Cynicism	-9.069	**.000

* Significance at 5%, ** Significance at 1%

Discussion

Individuals might be more positive toward the state agency than the federal agency overall. However, individuals still feel cynical about the state agency. They also indicated they might understand and feel they can get more involved with the state agency than the federal agency. However, individuals feel they don't have as much efficacy about the state agency overall.

Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy are related constructs because when individuals are more cynical, the less efficacy they have toward the government. GDOT has to deal with very complex information that individuals might not feel they understand completely; therefore, individuals have less efficacy overall in the state agency because they feel they do not understand the state agency. Since GDOT oversees engineering information, individuals might feel like they cannot understand the information GDOT has given to them. Because they do not understand the information, individuals might feel more cynical toward GDOT. The state agency oversees very complex information that might be harder for individuals to understand. Because individuals have issues understanding the information, they feel less efficacy toward the agency overall and have more negative feelings toward the state organization. To combat this, GDOT might have to do a better job in explaining the complex projects it is working on across the state. GDOT is integral to the public, but the public does not seem to understand what the state organization does.

Besides the issue of efficacy, the agency might have an issue of cynicism related to when it does hold Public Meetings. Often, individuals have strong feelings about projects in their area. They might have suggestions, which are not feasible. Therefore, because GDOT has not taken into account their ideas, they might feel cynical about the state agency. Although this is not fair to GDOT and its personnel, who try hard to take into account individuals' feelings toward projects, GDOT might need to do a better job in explaining projects and explaining why they cannot accommodate certain individuals. This might help in decreasing Political Cynicism in GDOT.

The findings are important for this study since GDOT is hoping to get the public involved more in Public Meetings/Open Houses. When individuals have less efficacy and more cynicism, they often fail to get involved in the political process. If GDOT were to work at increasing efficacy and decreasing cynicism, individuals might get more involved in Public Meetings. GDOT is integral in the everyday life of Georgia residents. However, individuals might dismiss the job GDOT does because they are cynical toward the state agency and feel their voice will not count. Public Trust is not an issue with GDOT alone though. We have seen individuals becoming more cynical and having less efficacy in their government over the past 5 decades. However, GDOT might be able to combat the Public Trust issue by focusing on decreasing cynicism and increasing efficacy. One way that might help would be to focus on Political Knowledge. Oftentimes, when the government focuses on educating individuals on what the government does, it can help increase Public Trust. We will look at Political Knowledge in our next section, while discussing some specific ways to increase public knowledge in GDOT specifically.

3.5 Political Knowledge Findings

Scholars have found that when individuals lack Political Knowledge, they often are less likely to get involved in the political process. When individuals fail to understand what government entities do, they often feel they should not get involved in the political process. That has led to apathy among the population because people fail to realize that they have a say in how their government functions. GDOT does integral work for the residents of Georgia. The state organization is extremely important, not only does it help individuals travel from one location to the next, but it also oversees ports and airports. We wondered if issues could be similar with GDOT. The organization does such

important work around the state; however, individuals lack Political Knowledge in how important the government entity is in their daily lives. Individuals might not know what GDOT does; therefore, they don't get involved in the public meetings and they don't understand the work GDOT is doing in their area. We asked seven Political Knowledge questions related to GDOT to determine if that had any impact on Public Trust in the state entity, as well as in the political process.

To test individuals' level of public knowledge, we asked them several multiple choice and one true/false question. The questions and percent that responded correctly can be found in Table 24. We asked what government entity oversaw roadways during snowstorms to determine if individuals understood what GDOT oversaw versus other government entities. More than 67% of people knew city officials took care of city roads during snowstorms. Nearly 77% of the individuals knew county officials took care of county roads during a snowstorm. When asked who oversees states roads, nearly 95% of the participants knew that GDOT maintains those roadways during snowstorms. GDOT also assists with interstates, with 68% of the individuals indicating the state agency helps maintain interstates during snowstorms. However, 32 % of individuals did not know that GDOT oversees interstates, indicating some might not understand what GDOT oversees in the state.

Besides overseeing roadways, the GDOT does so much more in the state, like overseeing ports and airports. We asked individuals if GDOT oversees these other important modes of transportation. Nearly 69 % of the respondents knew that GDOT oversees ports and airports, but 30 % of respondents failed to understand everything GDOT oversees. Respondents apparently did not know what the toll road was in the

55

state, with only 40 % of the respondents answering correctly that I-85 was a toll road, with nearly 60 % getting the question wrong. However, GDOT has done an excellent job in getting information out about its phone number, 511. Nearly 84 % of the respondents knew that GDOT had a phone number for cell phones when you are driving on the highway.

Table 24. Political Knowledge Questions and Percent of Respondents Who Answered Correctly

Question	% Correct
What agency oversees snow removal on city roads?	67.59%
What agency oversees snow removal on county roads?	76.85%
What agency oversees snow removal on state roads?	94.75%
What agency oversees snow removal on the interstates?	67.90%
The Georgia Department of Transportation oversees other modes of transportation besides roads, including providing planning and financial support for other modes of transportation such as rail, transit, airports and air safety planning. (T/F)	68.83%
The toll road in Georgia is _____.	40.43%
The Georgia Department of Transportation has a cell number for motorists to call to get up to the minute road conditions. Do you know what the number for this service is?	84.26%

We then examined the number of correct responses and overall average score to determine individuals' overall knowledge. The overall average score on the 7 knowledge questions was 72.2%. A frequency and relative frequency chart for the number of correct responses is provided in Table 25. An interesting pattern emerged in that individuals actually answered the Political Knowledge questions correctly more than what we have seen in national surveys. Fourteen percent of the respondents answered all 7 questions correctly, and 55% of the respondents answered 5 or 6 of the questions correctly. The

results are somewhat surprising. A possible explanation is that more of the respondents for our survey had higher levels of socioeconomic status. The respondents were educated and might have understood the government entity more than the average individual. We also asked only close-ended questions, where individuals could pick the right answer, which is more difficult than open-ended questions where one must recall the answer.

Table 25. Political Knowledge Frequencies and Relative Frequencies

Number of correct responses	Frequency	Percent
7	39	13.59%
6	77	26.83%
5	82	28.57%
4	47	16.38%
3	32	11.15%
2	7	2.44%
1	2	0.70%

To determine the relationship between Political Knowledge and Political Trust, we ran two simple linear regressions, corresponding to the two constructs of Public Trust. The first was Political Knowledge, as measured by the percent correct on the knowledge questions, as the independent variable and Political Cynicism as the dependent. The second used Political Efficacy as the dependent variable. We found a significant relationship between Political Efficacy and Political Knowledge, *Adjusted R^2* = .03 (*F* (1,322) = 9.13, *p* < .01), but failed to find the same significant relationship between Political Cynicism and Public Knowledge. The statistics for both regressions can be found in Table 26. The findings indicated that the more individuals know about GDOT (Public Knowledge) the more that they will feel they have a say in what GDOT does (Political Efficacy). Although Public Knowledge only explains less than 3% of the variance in Public Efficacy (R^2=.028), the variance that is explained is significant (F-

statistic p-value < .01). The findings are consistent with other research, in that Political

Efficacy has a stronger relationship with Political Knowledge than Political Cynicism.

Table 26. Statistics for Regressions of Public Knowledge versus Public Efficacy and Public Cynicism

Construct	R²	F-statistic	p-value	t-statistic (% correct)	p-value
Political Efficacy	.028	9.123	**.003	13.588	**.000
Political Cynicism	.014	0.086	.798	-0.257	.798

* Significance at 5%, ** Significance at 1%

Overall, educating individuals on what GDOT does might help people see how

integral this government agency is to their everyday lives. Georgia residents drive, walk,

bike, fly on planes and ride on trains as means of transportation. They use products

shipped to Georgia ports. GDOT oversees each of these different modes of transportation

that impact every facet of residents' lives. From driving to work, to getting groceries,

individuals need to understand how integral and important GDOT is to their lives.

Without education about GDOT, residents of Georgia might not realize all that GDOT

does to help improve their lives.

3.6 Public Meetings and Open Houses Findings

GDOT holds Public Meetings to get the public involved in its projects. Although

the meetings are important, residents in the state of Georgia often do not participate in

these important events. We asked individuals directly about their involvement in Public

Meetings/Open Houses that GDOT holds across the state. The questions were both close-

ended and open-ended. We found only a small percentage, 28%, indicated they had

attended a meeting held by GDOT, with 72% indicating they had never attended a meeting.

The open-ended question responses were analyzed using a standard method of qualitative analysis. Two of the scholars working on the study examined the responses to determine overall themes found in individuals' comments and the results for both scholars are compared for consistency.

Based on a close-ended question where we asked individuals specifically why they did not attend these important events, individuals responded overwhelmingly, 44%, that they felt GDOT needed to do a better job overall in explaining projects. After examining the open ended questions as well, one theme that emerged was that not only did they want GDOT to do a better job of explaining the projects, but they wanted that explanation prior to the meeting.

We also asked individuals in open-ended measures to explain what GDOT could do to make them more willing to attend a meeting. Again, a major theme that appeared was individuals felt that GDOT needed to do a better job in telling individuals about these potential projects going on in their area. For example, one respondent indicated that GDOT needed to "Give an overview of everything GDOT does; explain how the current issue fits in; explain what the options are and invite attendance." Individuals felt GDOT needed to explain projects in easier to understand terms.

GDOT has many talented engineers designing roads, and making them safer. However, most individuals aren't engineers. They might not comprehend the impact these projects will have on their overall safety and security. Even 3-D modeling has some limitations if individuals still don't understand the basics of projects. One respondent

indicated this in his/her response that adding the images really did not help him/her to understand the project completely. The respondent also indicated an issue explained in the next paragraph that we noticed when attending a Public Meeting/Open House ourselves.

When we attended the Open House in Savannah for the I-95/I-16 interchange project in June, we noticed that GDOT answered individuals' questions about the project. However, GDOT did not explain the project fully to the individuals in attendance. Unless residents asked questions, they would not understand the importance of the project and why GDOT was doing this redesign of the major interchange. The respondent indicated this in his/her response, adding that having a presentation might help individuals in attendance understand the project, rather than a reliance on the graphics and images. Instead of having an Open House where individuals stop in to ask questions, GDOT might utilize other methods, such as a meeting where it might spend 30 minutes explaining a project, then giving time for questions and answers (Q&A). GDOT might consider a follow-up study where it has both types of meetings, and we could test which meeting type had a better response overall from individuals in attendance. These types of meetings could mean GDOT has less GDOT personnel in attendance, with only a few needed to explain the project, and having a Q&A session afterward; therefore, GDOT could save money on the cost of the meetings.

Since scholars have shown there is a positive relationship between Political Knowledge and Public Trust, we propose that by explaining projects in a clear manner GDOT itself might increase Political Knowledge about these projects. By increasing Political Knowledge about the projects itself, GDOT might see an increase in Public

Trust. More trust in government often leads to increased political participation. Therefore, by being clear to the residents of Georgia about potential projects, GDOT might see more participation in Public Meetings/Open Houses that it holds.

Another theme that appeared in our open-ended measures discovered that many individuals did not know about the Public Meetings/Open Houses. Often, individuals questioned how to find out when meetings are scheduled, or where meetings are located. GDOT does a great job in ensuring that it informs neighbors and businesses directly impacted by the projects, however there are individuals in the area impacted by the GDOT projects because they frequently drive in the area. These individuals do not receive notification from the GDOT. Therefore, advertising the meetings via signage or billboards in a location where frequent drivers of the areas affected can see would be helpful. The signage needs to be legible by drivers (e.g. using billboards as opposed to low signs with too much information for a driver to read).

Individuals questioned how the GDOT advertised public meetings and open houses. Often, these meetings are advertised in the legal notices in local newspapers. However, as indicated in our survey results, not many individuals use their local newspaper. Even less individuals read the legal notices. Therefore, the GDOT might consider using other types of advertising, such as billboards in the area, as well as local media, newsletters, and social media, to reach people who might not live in the area, but who might be impacted by the project. Respondents indicated that other forms of advertising might be necessary including reaching out to community groups and the local chambers of commerce for spreading the word about meetings. Projects do not just impact those who live in that area. Projects impact those in a region. GDOT might

consider not only mailing to those directly impacted by a project, but emailing out information to those in a specific region. For example, instead of just informing individuals along a specific corridor about a proposed project and Public Meeting/Open House, GDOT might have to consider mailing or emailing out information to all the individuals in the city, or county, to let everyone know about the project. Respondents indicated that they would like more information on projects not only directly near them, but in their region because they might be invested in projects even though they are not directly living in the area.

Based on respondents' feedback, we suggest that using alternative methods to reach out to individuals is integral. Not only did respondents indicate that the state organization could use the Internet, individuals also indicated GDOT could use social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, to let individuals know about projects, as well as ask questions. Facebook allows for a "live" update online. GDOT might consider this tool to have a Q & A session regarding certain projects. Individuals could ask questions and give feedback on Facebook, with GDOT personnel responding. News Media have started using this as a tool to inform individuals about certain events. GDOT could utilize this tool as well to reach out to individuals about projects, while getting feedback.

Another major theme that came from our open-ended measures indicated that individuals found the meeting times and locations were not convenient to the general public. Although GDOT attempts to have meetings at times when people can attend, residents indicated that the time and locations were not convenient. Some respondents discussed how having meetings from 4 to 6 p.m., when most individuals are heading home from work, might seem convenient. However, when it came to working in Atlanta,

respondents indicated they could not get to the meetings by 6 p.m., especially when meetings are held in downtown Atlanta. Respondents indicated that either having meetings later in the evening might help them attend, or having meetings on weekends, when individuals have more time to attend meetings. Many government entities hold meetings in the evening, around 7 p.m., to give residents a chance to attend after work. GDOT might consider doing this as well to ensure individuals have the ability to attend the Public Meetings/Open Houses.

Respondents also indicated the location of meetings can be problematic, especially if they are held in downtown Atlanta or in a downtown area of a major city. Respondents wondered if GDOT could move meetings to the locations closest to the actual construction projects; therefore, individuals in the region, mostly impacted by the projects, could attend. We received quite a few responses from individuals who indicated they did not like the locations of meetings, especially when meetings are held in downtown Atlanta.

We do understand the issue is some individuals might find the current time and location convenient for them, while others find it not convenient. We wondered if GDOT might consider doing a small survey when it sends out notification about projects asking individuals specifically about the time and location they would like to see the state agency schedule the Public Meetings/Open Houses at. Different communities might have different ideas regarding when GDOT should hold these meetings. Therefore, by doing the survey, GDOT might get a good idea of when and where individuals in the region would like to meet to discuss these important projects as these results may vary by community.

Besides doing Public Meetings/Open Houses in different locations, GDOT might consider other methods to get individual participation in meetings. Many respondents indicated that GDOT might consider having "virtual meetings" online, where individuals could go at a certain time to get more information, as well as get their questions answered, regarding projects in their area. Virtual meetings might be a low-cost alternative to having large meetings in a location. Virtual meetings would allow individuals the ability to reach out to the state organization with increased participation in these types of meetings. Also, respondents suggested GDOT might consider recording these meetings, if GDOT does a presentation and Q&A session, and might place those recordings online to help residents who could not attend to see what happened and feel invested in the overall projects. However, GDOT is already publishing the recordings online. Therefore, this suggestion by the respondents may indicate a communication problem as the public is unaware of this GDOT practice.

Although we already tested Public Trust with our close-ended measures, we noticed a small percentage of those respondents who indicated extreme cynicism in GDOT and projects that GDOT was planning. Several individuals felt the meetings were a waste of time, according to some respondents, because GDOT has already planned the projects. Individuals felt since GDOT was already in the design phase, the state agency did not care about their overall opinion on the project. Although we know this is not true as GDOT involves the public very early in the planning phase, perception often can be an issue. Individuals asked if GDOT might allow a public comment phase during the actual planning of a project. Individuals indicated they might be willing to comment on ongoing projects using technology such as web forms, Facebook, or discussion boards instead of

just coming to a meeting after they perceive the design phase to be complete. Although individuals can solicit comments during the planning phase, there is a perception that their comments are not solicited until the design phase, as multiple individuals mentioned in the surveys. If they believe that they are participating in the planning phase, individuals might feel more invested in the projects themselves.

GDOT might consider having more frequent communication via face-to-face meetings, social media and email about when updates will appear and push notifications when updates are available on projects. Having communication and notification about updates on projects will let individuals know about when information regarding important projects in their area is available. Also, having information online and communicating early and often about the availability of that information will help GDOT with transparency. GDOT will be seen by individuals as being transparent, and providing valuable information, which would actually help the state organization with Public Trust. Individuals who see government entities as being transparent often see the government entity as being more trustworthy.

Individuals might also feel as though GDOT does not care about their opinion, which was a theme that appeared in our open-ended measures. Individuals indicated they felt GDOT did not take their opinion seriously. Several respondents discussed how they made suggestions at meetings, but felt their suggestions were ignored. We understand that GDOT cannot take into account everyone's opinions. Some ideas that individuals have might not be feasible. GDOT might consider better explanation regarding projects and why GDOT has designed projects in such a manner. The state agency will never make everyone happy, but having a clearer explanation regarding the projects might help.

We already discussed the issue that individuals felt the projects were not clear. GDOT might consider having information on the design, as well as the modeling, online before meetings, with an explanation of why the projects have been planned in such a matter. GDOT might consider having something online with the "most asked questions" or explanations to help individuals understand why projects are designed the way they are designed.

The issue we saw with GDOT's Public Meetings/Open Houses was when the government agency held the meetings in reference to when the projects were being finalized. Although the Public Meetings/Open Houses might allow residents to comment, and cause GDOT to make alterations to plans, individuals failed to recognize that this occurred. They see designs and believe that GDOT has finished the project and will not take into account their own ideas or opinions. GDOT might consider this when it begins to elicit responses from the residents of Georgia. Perhaps having meetings even earlier in the project cycle or soliciting comments when the project is in its infancy might help with public perception and being perceived as transparent. Allowing the public to comment as early as possible will help individuals trust GDOT more, meaning individuals might be more likely to be involved in the political process. This would be a low-cost method to get individuals to participate in Public Meetings/Open Houses, as well as increase the overall Public Trust individuals have in GDOT.

3.7 Recommendations to Improve Public Participation Based on Survey Findings

The construct of Public Trust is created with combining the two concepts of Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy. In this study, the findings indicated that individuals had less Political Cynicism and less Political Efficacy overall as compared to

the mean, which would indicate a neutral feeling toward Political Cynicism and Political Efficacy. Therefore, the findings suggested that individuals in this study had less Public Trust overall in GDOT. However, all government entities and large businesses have issues with Public Trust. We have seen Public Trust erode for the past 50 years, with less people trusting the government, according to polls like Pew Research Center for People & the Press. This is not an issue with GDOT, but with government as a whole. Open, transparent communication that appears early and often, can improve the perception of transparency, which leads to increased trust. Increased trust leads to better political participation.

GDOT might have concerns regarding Political Knowledge. GDOT is integral to our daily lives, yet residents obviously don't understand everything GDOT does. GDOT does not just oversee roadways. The state agency oversees all transportation into and out of the state of Georgia. GDOT has an impact on our economy and our daily lives. Individuals seem to lack an understanding of what the state agency does, as well as how much impact it has on their lives. This is not evident in the Political Knowledge questions on the survey, but is clearly evident in the public's comments suggesting that GDOT do some of the activities it already does (e.g. putting items online and getting the public involved early in the planning process). GDOT helps Georgia residents get to work and home from work. The state organization oversees ports that bring in goods to the state of Georgia. The state agency assists in overseeing Georgia's airports, so travel is integral to what the organization does. GDOT needs to educate the residents of Georgia about how important the agency is as well as what information is available as well as where it is available, because Political Knowledge often influences political participation in that

when knowledge decreases, individuals are less likely to get involved in the political process.

Table 27 provides a summary of the themes identified in this task and our recommendations for addressing the issues as well as any theoretical support provided from the academic literature related to the issue and recommendation. All themes listed in Table 27 were mentioned by a number of participants in the open ended comments and are further supported by the answers to the questions related to Public Trust and Public Knowledge.

Table 27. Summary of Themes Identified and Recommendations

Theme & Source	Recommendation	Theoretical Support
The public wants GDOT to do a better job of explaining the projects and the public wants that explanation prior to the meeting. *Source*: Close and open ended questions and our observations while attending meeting in Savannah for I-95	Communicate earlier, provide documents earlier, explain in easier terms (not technical like an engineer), do a presentation (don't just answer questions), have a Q&A after the presentation.	Political Knowledge leads to Public Trust. Making the public knowledgeable makes the public more inclined to trust and making things transparent makes the project easier to understand which makes the public feel more knowledgeable.
Cynicism: People think that meetings are a waste of time, as they do not feel that their input is valued or they feel that the project is already planned. *Source*: Open ended questions and our observations while attending meeting in Savannah for I-95	Communication about what phase of the project GDOT is in is key. According to our first GDOT meeting, public input is solicited early in planning. However, if all of the renderings are complete, people may feel that the project is already in the late design phase, which gives the perception public comment is futile. Allow the public to comment as early as possible, maybe even before the first public meeting and open house. This will lead to increased trust and participation.	Public Cynicism is a construct of Public Trust. If the public is more cynical, the public will have less trust. Reducing cynicism and improving transparency will lead to increased trust. Increased trust leads to more participation.
People asked GDOT to post information about meetings online and to post agendas and any other information	During face-to-face meetings, repeatedly let people know where on the web site information about a project will be available and when.	Increases transparency, which improves Public Trust.

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Theme & Source	Recommendation	Theoretical Support
being shared at the meeting prior to the meeting. *Source*: Open ended questions	Use social media and push email notifications when new information is posted. Put the agenda and any other related materials online prior to the meeting. Send the information to affected residents via email (or a link to them) and post it on social media sites as well.	
People don't know about meetings. Requested that GDOT advertise more. *Source*: Open ended questions	Advertise more with billboards to reach people impacted but do not live in the right of way, social media, media, and community groups. Use signage in the area where the construction project will occur and that is easy for a driver to read if it is a driving related project.	
People requested alternative forms of participation in meetings. *Source*: Open ended questions	Use virtual meetings. Publicize the use of Facebook and web site for Q&A.	
Meeting times and locations not convenient. *Source*: Open ended questions	Can have meetings later or on weekends and closer to the site affected (not downtown ATL when it is a construction project in outskirts). Survey community for individual projects about convenient times and location as these might vary by region. Use community groups to help with venues for meetings.	

GDOT's main focus for this project is how to get people more involved in Public

Meetings/Open Houses. By getting people to trust the agency, as well as by getting them

educated about the work GDOT does, the agency should see an increase of political

participation, namely attendance at public meetings.

CHAPTER 4. PROJECT VISUALIZATION STRATEGIES

4.1 Investigation of User-Friendly Formats for Visuals - Other State DOTs

This section considers the different visualization techniques employed by state DOTs to improve their strategies on public involvement. The information acquired to develop this section was obtained via online Internet explorations. For that purpose, all state DOTs' websites were visited and explored as regular users of those sites will do it. However, additional efforts were made to deepen those explorations to minimize missing pertinent links. The corresponding findings were collected in a table, herein referred to as the Technology Formats for Visuals (TFFV) Matrix (see Appendix G). It lists the various visualization techniques state DOTs are employing to enhance their outreach efforts while presenting current/future projects to their public. Even though considerable data were acquired, several state DOTs were not clearly listing this information on their websites and some others did not list anything in this regard. Therefore, even though the presented findings are the results of extensive searches, they cannot be considered exhaustive. The percent number of other state DOTs using each visualization technique is presented in Figure 14. The following paragraphs describe the meaning of each column in the related TFFV Matrix. Each column considers a particular technique.

Three Dimensional (3D) presentations: Undoubtedly, three dimensional presentations facilitate the visualization of relatively large spatial objects, such as roadways, bridges, intersections, and other civil structures. In this regard, 3D presentations are preferred over 2D ones. State DOTs have been using various different software packages to prepare these type of presentations in their public meetings or to post them in social media. The completed Internet searches indicated that **47%** of the state DOTs are using some sort of

three dimensional presentation for public meetings or for the projects displayed on their websites.

GIS Maps: Geographic information system (GIS) software is designed to capture, store, manage, analyze, and present all types of spatial or geographical data. A Geographic Information System helps visualize, question, analyze, and interpret data to understand relationships, patterns, and trends. One of the most popular GIS software packages is developed by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), headquartered in Redlands, California. GIS-based maps and visualizations greatly assist in understanding situations and explaining projects. Currently, most state DOTs, about **65%** of them, are using GIS maps to assist their presentations in public meetings.

Interactive Map Displays: Interactive maps are a web-based technique that employs maps with clickable points. Each of those points shows a box containing information about the point and/or the area near the point. The information box can store text, images, videos as well as links to external sites. Additionally, the information box may contain social media icons linking to a specific social media page. Many organizations use interactive online maps via the ArcGIS software, an ESRI product. State DOTs use interactive maps for displaying project zones, affected areas and related information. People using these maps could acquire a clear idea about the projects, their related construction areas and possible rerouting directions, and other pertinent information. Internet searches indicated that about **53%** state DOTs are using interactive maps.

Information Kiosks: Typically, a modern information kiosk is a stand-alone, electronic, device providing information and services, on computer screens, to one or more simultaneous users. Older kiosks did not have electronic components and were run by

assigned personnel. KIOSK is the name of a company that has led the industry in designing and manufacturing this type of electronic, self-service solutions since 1993. In 2010, Idaho DOT, IDT, partnered with the Boise Municipal Airport to design and build a video kiosk that informed travelers on several construction projects on nearby I-84 and the Vista Overpass. The kiosk was located on the first floor arrivals lobby, near the rental car counters. Similarly, in May 2013, IDT set up a staffed informational kiosk on the campus of Boise State University to inform students on the Broadway Bridge Replacement Project, obtain their input on design, and discuss with them about construction impacts. Still, it appears that the use of electronic information kiosks by state DOTs is not common. The Internet searches completed for this study reported that only about **2%** of state DOTs have been employing electronic kiosks for informing public about their construction projects.

Project websites: Internet searches indicate that approximately **61%** of state DOTs list ongoing or upcoming projects on dedicated web pages, linked to their official main websites. These web pages are created to inform the public about details of those projects and how taxpayers' money has been utilized in the proposed new construction and improvements. Posted information includes past, current and future schedule of the respective projects.

Images: Definitely, the utilization of images for any public presentation or for visual display on websites is a very effective means to transfer visual information. Internet searches showed that **67%** of DOTs are using images as part of their visualization techniques. These images could be as simple as pictures of the sites in question or more

complex products produced by classical long-range or modern close-range photogrammetry.

Blogs: Blogs are webpages where one or more writer presents information in separate entries, typically in reverse chronological order, and their readers are able to interact, via comments, with the authors. The word *blog* is short for *weblog* (which at one point was splitted into *we blog* and later reduced to just *blog*). Some state DOTs have their own blogs where DOT personnel write on construction related projects involving roads, highways, bridges, overpasses, etc. Usually, in these blogs, the comment section is open to the public so they can participate and present their own thoughts, opinions and concerns. After exploring websites of all state DOTs, it was found that approximately **22%** of them present transportation-related blogs.

Animations: Animations are generated by employing multiple images (single frames), temporally related to each other, and displaying them in sequential order, one after another. Animations could be employed to assist in the study and interpretation of phenomena involving motion, such as vehicular trajectories, pedestrian footpaths, development of vehicular queues and traffic in general. Additionally, as scientific knowledge increases and technology develops, more data could be acquired and more complex phenomena could be analyzed. However, at the same time, it becomes more challenging to process and interpret the continuously growing massive sets of acquired data during experimental and computational work. It is in this area that animation can also assist in the graphical visualization of time-dependent input and output parameters associated with large varying systems. The completed online searches showed that **45%** of state DOTs are using animation as one of their visualization techniques.

Social Media: They are web-based tools that allow people and/or organizations to exchange information. Social media is an effective way to reach out to the public. Nowadays, when a news story breaks, it typically happens on microblogging sites such as Twitter. Similarly, social networking services, such as Facebook, have become an important means of communication these days. Additionally, people often use web-based, video-sharing services such as those provided by YouTube where users can freely upload, watch, rate, share and comment on videos. YouTube presents the potential to reach a large number of viewers and convey selected information which could include propagandistic purposes. The general public watches YouTube videos for different purposes, ranging from just simple entertainment or daily information to learning intricate technical and scientific subjects. The completed Internet searches indicated that **69%** of state DOTs employ one or more forms of social media as a mode to reach out to their public.
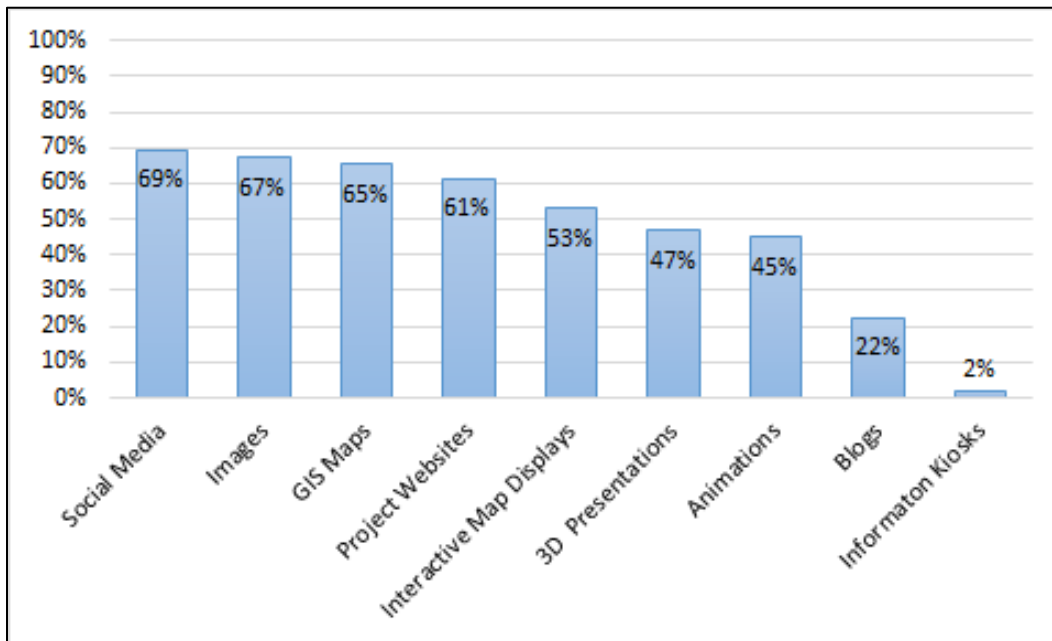
Figure 14 *Percent of Other State DOTs Using Each Particular Visualization Technique*

4.2 Visualization Techniques to Drive Individuals to GDOT Website (recommendations for VERG)

This section presents visualization techniques and/or software packages or other formats to convey information by other state DOTs to their public. They could be considered by GDOT to potentially expand its current visualization/information efforts. Each technique or software is listed under a respective subtitle and its corresponding narrative may refer to web address with related information. If that were the case, a number between parentheses, (#), is used to identify that address in the list at the end of each subsection.

Narrated Videos and Drive-Through Simulations of Projects on Social Media

YouTube is a popular web-based, video-sharing social medium. In general, individuals may visit YouTube for different purposes, including information, learning and entertainment. YouTube videos of a state DOT project, with clear narrative, explanations and realistic drive-through simulations, may not only properly inform the public, but they may also increase public interests in becoming more involved and interactive with DOTs, catalyzing the generation of needed feedback. As an example, in 2013, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) published a series of videos for the Verona Road Project. This is a multi-year, multi-stage, major road reconstruction project, including road width expansion and reconstructions of bridges and intersections. The associated work was expected to be completed in six years, by 2019. A brief description of those videos is provided in the following paragraphs, including associated web addresses.

The first video is the longest with a duration of 8 minutes and 41 seconds (8:41). It is entitled *WisDOT - Verona Road Project Overview*. It can be found at the below web

address, designated as (#1). It describes the full project, including *location*, *purpose*, *improvements* and *what will happen next* for the project. At the same time, it indicates quarterly public outreach meetings (open houses), where stakeholders and other individuals could provide feedback during the design stage. Additionally, it informs the public that a project website (#2) and a Facebook page (#3) present additional and updated information.

(#1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ia99nVH0F-o

(#2) http://www.veronaroadproject.wi.gov/

(#3) www.facebook.com/WIVeronaRoadProject

The second video (length 6:35) is entitled *WisDOT - Verona Road Project Stage 1* and is at the below web address, designated as (#4). It describes the two phases included in Stage 1 of the main project and informs on three major items: (i) improvements on local intersections anticipated to be used as diversion roads during construction; (ii) reconstruction and expansion of a portion of the Beltline; and (iii) reconstruction of a portion of Verona Road (US 18/151). The video also refers to the above mentioned website for the project (#2) and its Facebook page (#3).

(#4) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dm6LiXp563w

The third video (length 3:51) is entitled *WisDOT - Verona Road Project Stage 2* and can be found at the below web address, designated as (#5). This video informs on four major items: (i) reconstruction of a second portion of Verona Road and its expansion to three lanes; (ii) reconstruction of a portion of McKee Road; (iii) reconstruction of the intersection of Verona Road with McKee Road into a diamond interchange; and (iv)

reconstruction of the intersection of Verona Road with Williamsburg Way, where two alternatives are presented. Additionally, the video explains the location of several noise walls to be constructed. As it was the case in the previously described videos, this one also directs viewers to obtain additional and updated information on the website for the project (#2) and on its Facebook page (#3).

(#5) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LW84Uh7SSNI

Two additional videos present drive-through simulations along the work areas corresponding to stages 1 and 2. Both show well-designed, well-narrated, very descriptive, realistic drive-through animations, including numerous details, such as the new sound barriers (noise walls). The first simulation video (length 3:57) is entitled *WisDOT - Verona Road Project, Stage 1 Drive Through Animation* and its web address is indicated below as (#6). The second simulation video (length 4:50) is entitled *WisDOT - Verona Road Project, Stage 2 Drive Through Animation* and its web address is indicated below as (#7).

(#6) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKH8DYaMK0k

(#7) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ig9M0yBjlDU

Two more related videos present time-lapses of selected construction activities. One of them (length 2:00) is entitled *WisDOT - Verona Road Project, Beam Delivery Time-Lapse* and its web address is indicated below as (#8). This video presents the delivery and placement of a 100-foot long, 14-foot wide, and approximately 270,000-pound steel beam. It also includes information on construction schedule and traffic diversion. The other video (length 1:04) is entitled *WisDOT - Verona Road Project, Madison Beltline*

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Bridge Demolition Time-Lapse and its web address is indicated below as (#9). This video only presents time-lapse images without narration. These two videos play a more illustrative than informative role. In that regard, they may serve the public in a lesser capacity than the previously mentioned four videos.

(#8) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDTwSCNugtE

(#9) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qdOvjgrYY8

All mentioned seven videos can also be found at the following single web address: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ia99nVH0F-o&list=PLoGzf6P7PsQ9DQ3iblQGp1G9PX8f0Y6dN

Documentary Videos on DOT Web Pages

Relatively short documentaries informing on the history of existing DOT civil structures and/or explaining their modifications, reconstructions, demolitions and new projects could serve as an effective means to reach out to people that will be affected by those works. Additionally, it is possible that when taxpayers are properly informed on the needs, conditions and problems that projects will address, their trust on the agencies and interactions to provide feedback could be catalyzed. Due to the natural development of emotional public ties to iconic old structures, maintenance, modifications or even demolitions of historically significant bridges are becoming a challenge for different DOTs. Usually, it is not easy for the general public to understand the challenges leading to adopt a final decision. This task could be assisted by properly explaining those challenges and the reasons for discarding potential alternative solutions.

An example on the referred type of documentaries is presented by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department. It posted a video gallery listing different projects. One of them is on the *White River Bridge at DeValls Bluff* (#10). The video is about 27 minutes long and explains the reasons leading to decide on the demolition of an old historical bridge. The documentary explains why the historic bridge could not be saved and how the state funded money is used in this project. In this particular case, the public is informed that there were three choices:

- Preserve the bridge in place (either in vehicular or pedestrian use)
- Move it to a new location and maintain it
- Thoroughly document the bridge and demolish it

Due to U.S Coast Guard regulations, preserving the bridge could not be considered as a viable choice. An in depth investigation revealed that the river had changed its course in decades, since the bridge was built, and now peers are in the main channel. This constituted a severe hazard to barge traffic on the river. Preserving is not always feasible due to the cost, age, stability and safety. Relocating the bridge was not a cost effective option either. This lead them to make a final decision, the bridge would be documented and demolished.

(#10) http://www.arkansashighways.com/movies/devalls_bluff_documentary.aspx

Webpages Concentrating Public Information

Information concentrated and published in dedicated web pages, within the main websites of DOTs, could facilitate the finding of public information and, in turn, assist in developing people's interest and interaction with DOTs. The Public Information Office of

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) concentrates information in its **Newsroom** page (#11). There, it is first indicated that "*Providing timely responses to inquiries from the press, government officials, and the public is a crucial function of the Florida Department of Transportation.*"

At its top section, the FDOT **Newsroom** page presents links to *Images*, *News Releases*, *Public Notices* and *Videos*. The section on *Images* contains a link to FDOT photo archives with approximately 2,500 prints, mainly from 1955 to 1960, housed at the Florida State Library. It also links to SeeFloridaGo which is a relatively large, searchable, web-based, photo collection showcasing modern transportation in Florida. All pictures are free to be downloaded from the site. The section on *News Releases* presents links to chronologically ordered news releases from the Central and all Regional offices. They include announcements on public hearings. The section on *Public Notices* lists different meetings by district, such as public hearings, open houses, workshops, etc. The section on *Videos* presents links to YouTube videos containing information on FDOT events, training and more. One of those videos was recently uploaded by FDOT District 7 (#12) and shows an excellent animation of the planned Gateway Expressway project at Tampa Bay. It presents flyover views of traffic animations along the new sections, including toll roads, intersections, express lanes, etc. Its narration explains the general aspects and some details of the project. Undoubtedly, this video represents a powerful visualization technique to inform on the advantages and services this project will provide to its users. Additionally, the middle section of the **Newsroom** page lists the names, telephone numbers and email addresses of media contacts for 12 different districts/zones. The

bottom and last section of the **Newsroom** page contains links to Facebook, SeeFloridaGo, Twitter, YouTube, and WordPress (an online tool hosting FDOT Newsletter).

(#11) http://www.dot.state.fl.us/publicinformationoffice/newsroom.shtm

(#12) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvDM_aKextg

Access to Materials/Information Provided in Past Community Presentations

Posters, graphical displays, videos and presentations offered to the community during open houses and public hearings, could be made available in DOTs' websites for those citizens who were unable to physically attend the meetings, but still wish to find out about the projects planned in their areas. In this regard, Hawaii DOT presents a web page (#13) containing links to those type of posters and presentations. It allows the public to review past presentations. It suggests that users bookmark the main page to easily revisit it for future presentations. An example of an available poster is presented in (#14) below in PDF format. Additionally, feedback capabilities could easily be added to these types of online pages so the visiting individuals could still provide feedback, within certain time limitations.

(#13) http://hidot.hawaii.gov/presentations/

(#14) http://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Pahoa_Roundabout_Brochure_2016-05-17.pdf

Information on Individuals' Tax Dollars at Work

Taxpayers are naturally curious about how their contributions are spent by government agencies, including DOTs. In order to increase transparency and earn trust from their

public, DOT websites could provide this type of information. In this regard, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) presents web pages with the following content:

(1) <u>Your CDOT Dollar</u> (#15): This page tracks CDOT performance and transportation expenditures.

(2) <u>How CDOT Spends</u> (#16): This page presents a tool (Your CDOT Calculator) that allows individuals to estimate their contribution to Colorado's transportation system funding the previous year. The only required information is the type of fuel consumed, the amount of miles driven that year and the average miles per gallon attained by the user's vehicle. It estimates the total annual amount of taxes and fees drivers contributed to CDOT. Additionally, it shows how CDOT spent individuals' contributions in maintaining and expanding the system, among other expenditures.

(3) <u>Where CDOT Spends</u> (#17): This page uses an interactive map (powered by Esri) to track all CDOT projects statewide. Projects can be filtered by major funding sources. By clicking a green dot on the map, more information about a project will be shown in a popup window. Blue circles represent multiple projects and their individual locations can be visualized by zooming in. When available, a Show Road Segment link will present the road segment affected by the project.

(#15) http://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/otis/ycd

(#16) http://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/otis/YCD/How

(#17) http://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/otis/YCD/Where

The Do-Nothing Option

Explorations of the results from the do-nothing alternative, may actually make individuals and agencies react and do something to avoid reaching negative conditions. Thus, presentations involving simulations associated to the do-nothing option could be an effective means to justify do-something alternatives. In this regard, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) presents a simulation video (#18) for the Hampton - North Hampton 15678 project. As explained by NHDOT, "It shows a computer generated simulation of how traffic would back up in the year 2020 during the peak Sunday traffic volume period if nothing is changed at the existing Toll Plaza."

(#18)

https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/operations/turnpikes/ort/video/15678_vid_nobuild2020.htm

Broadcasting on Television or Radio

Broadcasting on local television or radio channels could be an effective way to briefly inform road users on the main aspects and/or potential traffic disruptions of selected projects. It benefits the general public who use the affected roads/bridges and those who cannot attend public meetings or are not familiar with Internet and/or social media interactions. However, this format mainly delivers information in one way, precluding most real-time interactions with viewers. An example of a relatively short (length 0:50) TV broadcast of an Arizona DOT project can be found at the below link (#19). It is entitled *Updates Coming to Busy Surprise Intersection*. The involved News agency is ABC15 Arizona. The recorded broadcast presents brief information on the reconstruction of the intersection at Bell Road and Grand Avenue, in the City of Surprise, Maricopa

County, Arizona. It involves the construction of a bridge over Grand Avenue to carry Bell Road. Information on closure times and general project schedule is provided to warn users of upcoming delays in that area.

(#19) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzMa0Ora-M8

Information Translated into Foreign Languages

In areas with diverse population, people from different countries, backgrounds and ethnicities may represent a significant part of the local economy. Initially, language barriers may discourage some members of these groups from participating in public meetings or hearings or even from providing feedback to DOTs to assist in DOTs' decision making processes. DOT websites are often informative, but people without proper English skills may find discouraging to reach to those websites to obtain information or to provide feedback. In this regard, the Connecticut DOT website (#20) presents a capability for selecting languages. It lists 94 different options. Navigation buttons and some pages are translated into those languages. Similarly, the Florida DOT (FDOT) offers translation services, free of charge, at the web page (#21) dedicated to public meetings. Partial and selective language translation could be employed to guide the referred populations to pages where they could communicate and/or provide feedback on proposed DOT projects.

(#20) http://www.ct.gov/dot/site/default.asp

(#21)

http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/publicsyndication/PublicMeetings.aspx/publicmeetings_district

Visualization techniques/software used by GDOT

Currently, the GDOT Visual Engineering Resource Group (VERG) employs highly trained personnel who use state-of-the-art, diverse visualization software packages and techniques to assist design tasks and enhance public information. VERG was established in the summer of 2013 and currently provides needed visualization services to GDOT. The continuation and growth of this group is highly recommended. Some of the software packages available to VERG are listed and briefly described below. Most of them are produced by Bentley Systems, Inc., and according to Bentley, are currently used by 45 US DOTs and 7 Canadian Ministries of Transportation.

MicroStation: It is the main engineering and architectural software platform produced by Bentley Systems Inc. It presents the typical capabilities of traditional computer aided design (CAD) software with the ability to generate detailed 2D drawings, vector graphics and 3D objects and elements. Additionally, renderings and animations can be produced by MicroStation. Bentley Systems was founded in 1984 and MicroStation 1 was first released in 1985. Today, 31 years later, its latest version is V8i. Currently, MicroStation is being employed by numerous state DOTs, including GDOT.

InRoads: It is a comprehensive roadway design and analysis software developed and sold by Bentley Systems, Inc. It runs on top of the MicroStation CAD platform and allows for the automation of numerous road design and analysis tasks. Its listed main capabilities are: generation of horizontal and vertical road alignments; generation of road longitudinal profiles and cross sections; design and analysis of corridors; generation of civil project deliverables; incorporation of third-party models in civil designs; incorporation of topography and aerial imagery; analysis and design of complete storm water and sanitary

sewer networks; modeling and analysis of terrain; ability to reuse common design layouts; simulation of vehicle path movements; and visualization of designs. The latter capability allows for the generation of 3D models of the projects that are being designed. It has the ability to perform preliminary analyses and design associated visualizations in real time. Its information-rich models can be integrated with mapping, GIS, and other tools such as PDFs and i-models (containers for conveying architectural, engineering, construction and operation information). GDOT has been using InRoads in the past and is now employing OpenRoads. As indicated in the next paragraph, *OpenRoads Designer* supersedes most of InRoads capabilities.

OpenRoads: It is a relatively newer software package, also produced by Bentley Systems, Inc. OpenRoads is an information modeling software with powerful, information-rich, 3D modeling capabilities for the design, construction and operation of roadways and other related civil structures. It allows the generation of dynamic 3D models from the initial design stages and assists in the exploration of design alternatives as the 3D models dynamically update with the incorporation of any modification. OpenRoads accepts any type of data available for the design, including classical total-station survey data, GPS data, photogrammetric data and point clouds (LiDAR data) of any size to generate terrain models. Information can be stored in the objects that are part of the design. It allows the use of Bentley Navigator for automated clash detection to avoid costly design errors. Regarding its visualization capability, it allows the generation of real-time animation of driving along the designed roads and associated corridor. Bentley's website (#22) provides the following descriptions of the three OpenRoads products:

- *OpenRoads ConceptStation* is an innovative, new application to enable rapid and iterative conceptual and preliminary design, leveraging contextual information obtained through point clouds, reality meshes, GIS, and other sources.

- *OpenRoads Designer* is a comprehensive and fully functioned detailed design application for surveying, drainage, subsurface utilities, and roadway design that supersedes all capabilities previously delivered through InRoads, GEOPAK, MX, and PowerCivil.

- *OpenRoads Navigator* enables 3D design visualization and design review and progresses approvals and issues resolution, at the office, in the field, or at the site.

(#22) https://www.bentley.com/en/products/brands/openroads

LumenRT: This is another product by Bentley capable of producing high-quality visualizations and high-definition videos of simulated project designs. It allows for the rapid generation of images, videos and real-time presentations of architecture, landscape, urban and infrastructure design. Bentley's website (#23) presents the following description of LumenRT capabilities:

- Animation of infrastructure models with elements in motion such as simulated traffic using vehicles of all types, moving people, wind-swept plants, breeze-animated and seasonal trees, rolling clouds, rippling water and much more.

- Easy generation of attention-grabbing, cinematic-quality images and videos.

- Sharing of interactive, immersive 3D presentations with any stakeholder using Bentley LumenRTLiveCubes.

- Creation of Bentley LumenRT scenes directly from inside MicroStation, including V8i SELECT series and CONNECT Edition, Autodesk Revit, Esri CityEngine,

Graphisoft ArchiCAD, Trimble Sketchup and also import from many leading 3D exchange formats.

(#23) https://www.bentley.com/en/products/product-line/reality-modeling-software/lumenrt

Selected Visualization Software Packages Used by Other DOTs

RDV Systems: RDV stands for Rapid Design Visualization. The software was first introduced in 2005 and was developed to be employed with Autodesk's Civil 3D. Actually, RDV developers worked in coordination with the Civil 3D Development Team to produce RDV. The software allows designers to easily generate a 3D interactive, virtual environment containing the designed project. Several simulation activities for roadways and land development projects, of any complexity, can be developed. Examples of those activities are drive-through simulations, flyovers and interactive simulations to improve and optimize designs. RDV interactive visualizations allow the user to freely move around the model and virtually take the audience (clients or citizens in public meetings) to the project site to observe it from different points of view, along different directions. The models can be viewed on a personal computer or online, via an Internet browser, or on a smartphone with the assistance of a related application. The LinkedIn home page for RDV systems (#24) provides the following information: "*RDV Systems produces visualization software technology as well as provides models as a service for civil engineering professionals, using proprietary, state-of-the-art technology to bring your proposals and designs to life. We deliver an interactive 3-D model that lets you freely navigate the project site, look at any point from any position, and produce still shots and animations on-the-fly, all in an easy-to-operate Viewer. Most importantly,*

RDV's technology platform and expertise lets us produce these models with significant savings in time and costs. RDV's services have been used worldwide by engineering companies, public agencies, airport authorities, and mining companies. Many examples of our work can be found on www.youtube.com/rdviz or on our website at www.rdvsystems.com. In addition, RDV provides state-of-the-art software tools for visualization and simulation for civil and infrastructure projects. These products make it fast and easy for design professionals to create realistic 3D models that enable them to effectively communicate and collaborate with project stakeholders, assess the impact of proposed projects on their environment, and quickly evaluate alternative designs. RDV also provides advanced tools and services for analysis of sight distance, camera placement, field-of-view, and noise impact based on the project site model, and has specialized tools for aviation engineering for airspace analysis." Alabama DOT website lists RDV Systems as its software for visualization purposes. According to RDV Systems, the following state DOTs are using its software as well: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Rhode Island and Wisconsin.

(#24) https://www.linkedin.com/company/rdv-systems

GEOPAK, Civil Engineering Design Suit: This is another software product by Bentley and is currently employed by several state DOTs. However, Bentley indicates that OpenRoads Designer (mentioned above) supersedes all capabilities previously delivered through InRoads, GEOPACK, MX and PowerCivil. Therefore, no additional information on GEOPACK is provided here.

Traffic Simulation: Regarding software for traffic simulation, a recent presentation (#25) by Anita S. Johari, from ASJ Engineering Consultants, LLC, at the 2016 ITE/IMSA

Spring Conference, in Arizona, compares modern traffic simulation software for macro and microscopic traffic models. For the project development stage, Anita Johari listed the following software as possible packages to use: aaSIDRA, HCS (Highway Capacity Software), Synchro/Sim Traffic, VISTRO, PASSER, TRANSYT-7F, and AIMSUN2. Similarly, for the project design and operations stages, Anita Johari listed the following software packages, CORSIM/TSIS, PARAMICS, VISSIM, TransModeler, and Synchro/Sim Traffic. Regarding general model comparison, she indicated:

- **TransModeler** and **VISSIM** allow for the most flexibility in creating an innovative design – Parkways, Continuous Flow Intersections, Complete Streets, Transit facilities.

- **Vistro** still has some bugs – Software needs fixes.

- **Vistro** signal timing optimization more flexible than **Synchro** and **TransModeler** – seems to provide results with improved delay & line of sight (LOS).

- Time required to code / ease of coding Innovative intersections/Corridors: **TransModeler<VISSIM**.

- Time required to code / ease of coding conventional intersections: **Synchro≤Vistro<TransModeler<VISSIM**.

Anita Johari's conclusions are as follows:

- **TransModeler** tends to produce higher movement delays than the other software, especially at congested locations.

- **TransModeler** generates lower delays for parkways (e.g. 2-phase signals), but higher delays for conventional intersections (e.g. 6- or 8-phase).

- **Vistro** and **Synchro** generate higher delays for parkway locations, while **VISSIM** shows generally some of the lowest delays.

- Software results generally higher delays than field data, indicating that analyses are conservative.

- No clear "winner" in travel time comparison

- Calibration is Key!!

(#25) http://www.azite.org/ITEIMSAspring/SpringConf2016/5C1%20-%20

Application%20and%20Comparison%20of%20Traffic%20Modeling%20Software.pdf

Traffic Simulation - WATSim: The Florida Department of Transportation lists (#26) several reports where the software WATSim has been employed during the 2000-2010 decade to model traffic simulation. WATSim stands for *Wide Area Traffic Simulation.* It is a proprietary traffic simulation software developed by KLD Associates/KLD Engineering. WATSim was first presented at the 1996 annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board. The software was transformed from its original predecessor, TRAF-NETSIM, to a new one with a new treatment of vehicle movements, new logical constructs, new formulation of major sub-models, and new code. In addition, its scope was greatly expanded to provide a detailed simulation of traffic on freeway, ramp and surface street networks at microscopic detail. An affiliated interactive computer graphics program known as AWATG was employed to provide on-screen 2D and 3D animated displays of simulated traffic operations. Since information on WATSim was not readily available on the Internet, its developer, KLD, was contacted by the authors of this report. During this communication, KLD indicated that, currently, it provides traffic simulation services. For general traffic engineering work, KLD uses a variety of off-the-

shelf and some proprietary software. These include Aimsun, WATSIM, Vissim, Synchro/SimTraffic, HCS, Transmodeler, etc. However, for communication between public agencies and the general public, KLD indicated that a realistic visualization is very effective, and it is under these circumstances (public meetings) that KLD has provided its clients with enhanced (rendered) versions of the WATSim animations. These rendered animations are high quality, but are relatively costly to produce. Since some of the off-the-shelf software packages now have 3D options, KLD would now try to use one of those options. **Aimsun 3-D** would likely be KLD's first choice, although KLD has also used **Vissim**. For emergency planning work, KLD simulates evacuations using a proprietary modeling package - Dynamic Evacuation II (**DYNEV-II**) simulation system. This package includes a map-based 2D animator, which uses output from the traffic evacuation model to provide an animation display of the traffic congestion within the study area on a GIS map of the highway network.

(#26) http://www.dot.state.fl.us/SearchResults.shtm?cx=017316194735045521938%3

Avyo1fdrdg3g&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=UTF-8&q=WATSim&sa=

ArcGIS Online: Several state DOTs (Iowa, Oregon, Washington State, etc.), use interactive maps powered by ArcGIS Online to convey transportation information to their public. As explained in one of its web-based help pages (#27), ArcGIS Online is a web-based, collaborative geographic information system that allows page visitors to use, create, and share maps, scenes, apps, layers, analytics, and data. It presents their user administrators (state DOTs) with tools to customize their corresponding home pages, to configure the website, to invite and add members, to determine their roles and to establish the security policies. The website of the WSDOT Online Map Center (#28) shows the

use, by a DOT, of interactive maps, powered by ArcGIS Online. A related web page

(#29) indicates "These resources are intended to help citizens better understand the state

transportation system and make more informed decisions." Additionally, it indicates that

feedback can be provided via the indicated email address and telephone number.

(#27) https://doc.arcgis.com/en/arcgis-online/reference/what-is-agol.htm

(#28) http://wsdot.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html

(#29) http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/products/onlinemapcenter.htm

4.3 Effective Use of Social Media Sites, Visualizations Available to the Media and Visual Preference Survey

Currently, the state transportation agencies are using social media and online sites to

connect to their public and enhance their involvement. After looking at each state DOT

website, a matrix was created to find the most popular forms of social media and online

tools employed (see Appendix E). Accounts for state DOTs were found on the following

sites: ***Facebook***, ***Twitter***, ***YouTube***, ***Vimeo***, ***Instagram***, ***Flickr***, ***Pinterest***, ***LinkedIn***,

WordPress, ***Tumblr***, and ***Issuu***.

     Facebook is known for its multi-purpose platform that allows users to post

photos, videos, memos, and even play games; whereas, *Twitter* allows users to only post

140 characters at a time. Eighty-seven percent (**87%**) of agencies are using *Twitter* to

connect to the public and **75%** of agencies are employing Facebook.

YouTube and *Vimeo* are video sharing platforms that agencies are using to share visuals

and information to educate the public. *YouTube* is the most popular of the two and

receives more traffic. However, *Vimeo* is a more professional site with less ads. Alaska

and Arkansas are the only two states using Vimeo. Therefore, **71%** of transportation

agencies are using *YouTube*.

These agencies are also displaying images and visuals on photo sharing sites such

as *Flickr* and Instagram. The latter acts as more of a social media outlet; whereas, *Flickr*

operates as a storage or backup tool for visuals that can be accessible to others. Agencies

can upload albums from various projects to *Flickr. Instagram* only allows one photo or

video upload at a time. Thirty-eight percent (**38%**) of transportation agencies have Flickr

accounts and **10%** of agencies have Instagram accounts.

Tumblr, WordPress, and *Issuu* are familiar blogging sites that address selected issues, and

catalyze interactions and conversations on various transportation topics. Only **13%** of

transportation agencies are blogging. However, these agencies post monthly and often

weekly.

Two other forms of social media being used by transportation agencies are

Pinterest and *LinkedIn. LinkedIn* is a business social networking service used to find job

candidates and business partners; however, only **10%** of agencies have an account on

LinkedIn. Pinterest on the other hand, has become the sharing platform for brilliant ideas,

projects, and information. Like *Facebook,* it allows users to post (pin) videos and images

that are discovered by others; therefore, **12%** of the agencies are using *Pinterest*.

Although the state transportation agencies are using social media outlets to send out

traffic updates, a traveler information system is active in **73%** of the state DOTs. This

system, also known as *511*, operates as a telephone service and a mobile site for travelers

seeking current traffic conditions.

The Georgia Department of Transportation and other state transportation agencies are partnering up with a new transportation app called ***Waze***. This app is different from other transportation apps because it acts as a social networking site too. Users can create profiles with the option to add friends, and interact with one another based on their trips and experiences. The app acts as a navigation system but also allows you to see upcoming hazards and traffic updates from information provided by other ***Waze*** users traveling the same route. This app also allows you to make stops within your trip without interfering with the final destination. The app allows users to see restaurants, gas stations, commercial retail stores, etc. in the area by marking on the map with a red "pin". These "pins" allow you to see the hours of operation, contact information, and provide links to their websites and social media. This feature could benefit Georgia DOT, by providing a "pin" for its projects and construction along these routes. Georgia DOT could also provide the contact information of the project manager or hotline, the project website, and/or social media accounts associated.

Another social media app that is very popular and allows users to create a "story" for others to follow is Snapchat. The "story" is made up of a series of videos, images, and messages that can last 3-10 seconds each and are only accessible for 24 hours after posting. ***Snapchat*** and ***Twitter*** have allowed the public to follow the lives of their favorite celebrities, athletes, politicians, and corporations. The Georgia DOT could create an account on ***Snapchat*** for the public to follow and receive information on projects and events. This app would attract a younger audience and is a form of free advertisement for Georgia DOT to enhance public involvement. Another feature that Snapchat is widely known for is its ability to apply emoticons, text, and filters to videos and images that are

shared. Depending on one's location, a filter will vary and contain the name of the city or town one is in, or the events happening in that area. The Georgia DOT could create a filter for its public meetings and events that users attending can post their "story" to.

Regarding the menu of services offered by Visual Engineering Resource Group (VERG), the research team has designed a visual preference survey (Appendix H) in order to better understand what the most effective visuals created are for the general public. The preference survey is inclusive to situations when individuals may experience these visual techniques in social media hubs or other online tools for a better comprehension of the project scope, design and challenges.

4.4 Plan for Using the Website and Other New Technology Formats

Having a relatively simple, well organized and fully informative DOT website is challenging but crucial to attract visitors and make them feel welcomed, not overwhelmed or lost and discouraged by the amount of information in front of them. In this regard, the website of Colorado DOT (https://www.codot.gov/) is user friendly, presenting a simple front page with just six large main buttons on the following subjects: *Travel*, *News*, *Safety*, *Performance*, *Business Center*, and *Program and Projects*. Each of them leads to a subpage with additional options. Alternatively, each of those main buttons also contains an imbedded *More Options* button that displays a pull-down menu showing additional options (same as those encountered in the subpage). For example, if users were looking for information on the Advanced Guideway System (AGS) Feasibility Study, involving a 120-mile segment of I-70, they should hover on the *Program & Projects* main button, click on the *More Options* button and select the *Studies and Assessments* option. Then, in the newly opened page, they should select the *Interstates*

option, and finally, in the new page, should select the link for *AGS Feasibility Study*. That is, visitors looking for this particular information should be able to intuitively find it in just four clicks. This contrasts with the clicking path that has to be followed in GDOT website to find information on a particular project. For instance, to find the information presented during the open house for project *SR 67 Widening*, the clicking sequence is larger and less intuitive. Additionally, at one point, it requires a search of the project by county or by name.

As informed in a previous section of this report, the Colorado DOT website presents information on how taxpayers' money is being used by the agency. By providing these data (most likely in approximated amounts), the agency's financial transparency improves and this, in turn, could increase public trust on DOTs. Under the *Performance* subject, the *Your CDOT Dollar* link takes the user to a subpage where the *Your CDOT Calculator* can be employed to estimate the user's total annual taxes and fees paid to CDOT (http://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/otis/ycd). This web-based tool breaks the calculated total into amounts that were used for maintenance, expanding the system, delivering programs and projects, etc. Similarly, the *Where CDOT Spends* link takes the user to a subpage (http://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/otis/YCD/Where) containing an interactive web-based GIS map with clickable points to show summarized information on the associated projects, including other data, the funding source for the project, the awarded amount, the current budget and the current expenditures. Given the capability of these web-based GIS interactive maps to store and convey useful information, they are highly encouraged to be employed by state DOTs.

Since public participation, involvement and feedback are intensely sought by state DOTs, all announcements on planned open houses, public hearings or similar events should be easily found and readily accessed in DOTs websites by interested and potentially affected users. In this regard, the front page of the agency main website should contain a button linking to the page with information on those events. The label of the proposed button could be *Public Participation* and the linked subpage should contain additional links to account for different types of participation. Specifically, these links may be created to inform on upcoming open houses, hearings, and another links to report potholes or needed maintenance on specific roads, etc. This could be in addition to similar links located at the pages where the related projects are described and lead to the page with information on open houses, hearings, other meetings of interest for the respective projects, etc.

The overall goal of VERG is to present projects to the public in a manner they can better understand and realize much better the purpose of the projects and the consequences of not implementing improvements associated with existing infrastructure. However, VERG's goal is not necessarily to introduce them to Civil Information Modeling (CIM) or 3D Modeling. The entire reason the group is producing a visual deliverable is that the improvement or construction concept will be easily understood by non-technical people so they don't have to understand engineering principles, safety regulations, etc. The public will see only the end product with its benefits.

Concerning considerations taken into account in producing the visual deliverables, some factors are recommended to be taken into account. The scope and intent (purpose) of the project (as well as the scope of the visuals to be produced) should

drive the deliverables that are produced. For instance, in a project example from Office of Design Policy and Support provided to the research team, VERG was working on a project; and in the initial kick-off meeting, the suggested deliverable was a video simulation that would show the proposed being laid over the existing conditions, which was a major amount of work. However, the intent of the project and deliverables became clearer during the meeting. The intended purpose of the deliverables was to clearly show the public how building a one-way road pair will impact their downtown area and even improve it and will also be a better option for them than a proposed bypass that would pull traffic away from their town and businesses. An overhead shot of a video simulation would not produce the intended result so the decision was made to simply create still renderings of "before" and "after" in specific areas of the city downtown area. This would allow people to clearly see the improvements to their town created by the project and "sell" the one-way pair over the bypass. As these visuals can be posted into a *Public Participation* area of the website, an addition with the short description of benefits for considering the better alternative above can be made and therefore be very helpful for general and affected public understanding and acceptance.

As the timeline to deliver these visual services is a critical factor, the visual production and delivery have to be considered early in the public involvement process in order to provide a clearer picture and intent of the project (at a project's initial concept meetings). Quick analysis of the needed VERG deliverable to provide a clearer picture and intent of the project should be performed during these meetings. This would allow project team members involved in *Public Involvement* activities to consider alternatives for producing a video simulation, still renderings, etc. based on complexity and various

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other environmental factors directly affecting the project. Also, photos could be taken at the critical areas, survey control points gathered, and therefore renderings can be quickly produced. For needed visuals, inclusion of time in the project schedule dedicated to produce these is a must for preliminary engineering.

The criteria of addressing constructability, safety and sustainability are considered by the engineers in their design of the project, so the visual deliverables are produced directly from their design data. VERG is addressing these criteria indirectly and presenting them to the public in a way they can better understand. VERG is using the design data (i.e. alignments, surfaces, etc.) to build most of all deliverables so that these criteria are included. As VERG is working directly with the designer and project manager through the entire process to ensure that the deliverables are in agreement with their design/intent, the final deliverable will reflect the true design refined in the concept team meetings. VERG should continue to produce deliverables which clearly reflect safety for as many projects as possible. VERG has produced several video simulations to help the public better understand how to navigate roundabouts for quicker buy-in. The Public Information Open Houses (PIOHs) can emphasize (for these cases) on the fact that roundabouts are being used as an alternative intersection design to improve safety and for capacity situations. This information may be posted along with any visuals developed for the project into the *Public Participation* area of the website. Additionally, cases should be presented to the web visitors (whenever possible) to illustrate on build/no-build situations reflecting the actual design year traffic to clearly show the advantages of building the project versus the consequences of not building the project in terms of congestion and safety.

As far as funding challenges for producing visual deliverables, the time is currently being charged to the Office of Design Policy and Support overhead budget and other funds. As VERG is now part of the initial project scoping meetings, the Project Team Initiation Process (PTIP), the group is being included in the project schedules where a need is seen for these services to specific projects. In these particular cases, time will be charged to the project engineer (PE) funds for each project as the group works as part of the project team.

CHAPTER 5. NEWS MEDIA PRACTITIONERS AND PREPARATION OF GDOT NEWS TO MEDIA

5.1 Agenda Setting and Agenda Building

In Mass Communication, scholars use agenda setting and agenda building to determine how the media impact public opinion formation. Agenda setting is the idea that when the media talk about certain issues, those issues become salient in individuals' minds (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Roger & Dearing, 1996; McCombs, 2004). Sei-Hill, Scheufele, and Shanahan (2002) have shown that when the news media discuss issues, such as transportation, individuals will cite transportation as a major issue facing their community. Therefore, the GDOT wants to determine what best management practices it needs to reach out to the news media in general, in order to reach out to individuals, specifically regarding public meetings and projects. Agenda building deals with this in terms of how policy makers could shape the media agendas by placing certain issues in the forefront of the minds of journalists. The Pew Research Center has shown that individuals still rely on local news, including television news and newspapers, to get local information. In 2015, the Pew Research Center studied three areas of the country, including Macon, and found that 9 in 10 people indicated they followed their local news closely. So, if GDOT could successfully get on the media's agenda, the agency will reach the public. GDOT is competing for a limited amount of space in the media's agenda with other government agencies, as well as other issues. To understand how to better tailor messages to ensure those messages make it into the media agenda, the team surveyed news media practitioners to determine why they choose to cover GDOT. The survey asked news media practitioners about how GDOT could better prepare messages for the

media to use. The results of the survey provided insight about how the media determine what issues are important enough to include on their agenda and what information GDOT could provide that might help convey the importance of GDOT's message.

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting is a common phrase in the discussion of politics and public opinion that summarizes the dialogue and debate in every community, from local neighborhoods to the international arena, over what should be at the center of public attention and action (McCombs, 2004). Social scientists have elaborated on the ability of the mass media to influence many aspects of our political, social, and cultural agendas.

In 1922, Walter Lippmann wrote a book about agenda setting called *Public Opinion*. He never actually used the phrase "agenda setting" but the book established the connection between world events and the images in the public mind (Lippmann, 1922). Then in 1963, Bernard Cohen made the observation that "the world will look different to different people depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors and publishers of the papers they read" (Cohen, 1963). He also noted that "the media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (direct quote - Cohen, 1963).

It wasn't until 1972 when Max McCombs and Donald Shaw formalized the theory after exploring the issues of media influence during a 1968 study on the American presidential election, also known as the "Chapel Hill Study." This study attempted to match what Chapel Hill voters said were key issues of the campaign with actual content of the mass media that was used during the campaign (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Between September 18, and October 6, 99 interviews were completed of Chapel Hill

voters. McCombs and Shaw were able to establish a strong association between what the 99 residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, thought was the most important election issue and what the local and national news media reported was the most important issue. By comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions of the most important election issue, McCombs and Shaw were able to determine the degree to which the media determines public opinion. "This clearly establishes that there is an important relationship between media reports and people's ranking of public issues." (Baran & Davis, 2011). McCombs and Shaw also suggested that voters have few sources of information other than the mass media to identify issues, such as campaign issues.

There are two basic assumptions that underlie research on agenda setting: 1) press and media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it, 2) the media concentrate on a few issues, and lead the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. The mass media force attention to certain issues, which causes the audience to change their focus, making the new issue fresh in the audiences' minds.

Two distinct levels of agenda setting have been discovered to help explain the agenda setting theory. First level agenda setting is focused more on the perceived importance, or relative salience, of issues or subjects (Wu & Coleman, 2009). Agenda setting occurs because the press is responsible for what the audience is allowed to hear, and what the audience is not allowed to hear. Second level agenda setting is focused more on the perceived importance of attributes or issues (Wu & Coleman, 2009). "The focus at this level is not on what media emphasize, but on how they describe it," (Coleman & Banning, 2006, p.314). Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story. For

each object, there is also an agenda of attributes because when the media and the public talk and think about an object, some attributes are emphasized, others are given less attention, and many receive no attention at all (McCombs, 1972). Within second-level agenda setting, there are two different categories: cognitive and affective. Cognitive focuses on facts, while affective focuses on characteristics. Second-level agenda setting focuses on certain cognitive and affective attributes, which helps the audience think about those attributes.

What we know about the world is largely based on what the media decides to tell us, and what the media decides not to tell us. The media agenda presented to the public results from countless day-to-day decisions by many different journalists and supervisors about the news of the moment. The public agenda, or what is the focus of public attention, is assessed by public opinion polls that ask some sort of variation of the question- "what is the most important problem facing our world today?" For example, when Chapel Hill voters were asked to state the most important issue of the day, their responses closely reflected the pattern of the news coverage that took place in the prior month.

Other factors can also affect agenda setting. Things such as gatekeepers, editors and managers, and external influences, which may include non-media sources, government officials, and influential individuals, all can have an impact on the media influence and can affect agenda setting. Choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters, also plays an important part in shaping political reality. The mass media force attention on certain issues that they believe are important.

Another factor that can affect agenda setting is individual agenda setting and how it differs from person to person. Some people read the newspaper, some people read online, some do both. A study done by Scott Althaus and David Tewksbury in 2002 addressed this subject. They conducted a study that assessed the gaps in literature by exploring the differences in individual-level agendas brought about by prolonged use of online versus paper editions of the same newspaper (Althaus &Tewksbury, 2002). The study was based on data that showed the differences in agenda-setting effects produced among readers of the printed version of *The New York Times*, the online version of *The New York Times,* and a group having exposure to neither. Two differences are especially relevant to the agenda-setting process. The way the news is presented on print versus online alters the traditional way that editorial decision is made, which in turn can influence the issue agendas of the readers. The first difference is that online news sites encourage users to be highly selective in their consumption of news content provided by editors (Heeter et al., 1989; Williams, Philip, & Lum, 1985). A consequence of this is that readers that choose online news are not likely to be exposed to different stories other than what they have searched for online. The second difference is that the way that the news is presented in print is not suitable for use on the web. Things such as screen size and font size make it difficult for headlines of visual cues to be included in online news stories. With all of that being said, Althaus and Tewksbury were able to conclude that readers who choose to read print versions are exposed to a much larger range of news coverings than readers who choose to read online print.

Local and state news also has an impact on the agenda setting process. When a local news organization focuses on a certain issue, people in the area believe that issue is

the most important problem facing the region. Sei-Hill, Scheufele, and Shanahan (2002) studied the impact a local development had on several issues, including traffic concerns. They discovered that on a local level the news media had an impact on agenda setting effects.

We have also seen agenda setting even with increased political cynicism and decrease of political trust. The relationship between media use and trust is generally mediated through political knowledge, which leads to political discussion and self-efficacy (McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). The relationship between media use and political attitudes is highly dependent on audience characteristics (Avery, 2009; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Norris, 2000; Pinkleton & Austin, 2001) and media characteristics (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; Avery, 2009; Bennett et al., 1999; Moy & Pfau, 2000).

Agenda Building

In most communities, the number of potential public issues exceeds the capabilities of decision-making institutions to process them all. Issues must compete for a place on the decision-making agenda. Agenda building is a process by which demands of the population are translated into items vying for the serious attention of public officials (Cobb & Ross, 1976). Agenda building often happens because the organization and the media both see the importance of the issue for the public. Certain newsmakers, like the president, make news no matter what they do. Organizations can also be newsmakers by reaching out to the media about what is happening in the organization. The term agenda building is sometimes used over agenda setting to highlight that the agenda is not dictated by top-level decision-makers. Instead, the agenda is the end result of multiple levels of an

organization that work together to make an issue consensual, legitimate, and resource consuming.

Because information is at the center of an individual and his or her decision making process, control of the information in which he or she is receiving will then control his or her actual decision making. Those with the power to control the price of information not only control its consumption, they also influence the decisions that are based on that information (Gandy, 1982). Policy makers place the idea of something on the media's agenda so the media will provide coverage on the issue. For example, crime has always been an issue in the United States. Society tolerates a certain amount of crime. When crime rises dramatically or is perceived to be rising dramatically, it then becomes an issue for policymakers to address and bring to the audiences' attention.

Who actually sets the media agenda is a complicated question. Steven Littlejohn and Karen Foss (2011) suggest that there are four types of power relations between the media and the sources. First is high-power source and high-power media, which means both are equal in setting the agenda. For example, a popular president could be a source to a well-known media outlet like Fox. Second is high-power source and low-power media, which means the source sets the agenda for the media. For example, the source, which could be an influential politician, has more power than the media outlet, which may be a local newspaper. Third is lower-power source and high-power media, which means the media set their own agenda and may marginalize the source. Fourth is both the media and the source are low-power, which means both are too weak to set the agenda.

5.2 Method - Qualitative Interviews

We wanted to investigate how to best reach out to media practitioners across the state. With agenda-setting theory, when the media focus on certain issues, those issues become salient in the public's agenda. Agenda Building scholars have determined when a person or organization can get on the media's agenda, then that also filters out to the public's agenda. GDOT does integral work within the state of Georgia. However, the state organization often competes with other state agencies, as well as the federal government, to get issues on the media's agenda. We looked at how media practitioners viewed GDOT and how the organization might build the media's agenda in a qualitative survey, by doing in-depth interviews of media practitioners to see if they consider transportation as a major issue in their region, as well as how GDOT might be able to reach out to the media practitioners to put information on the media's agenda. We interviewed 15 media practitioners from across the state, including broadcasters, print journalists, and radio personalities. We wanted to get media practitioners from all regions of the state, from Atlanta and Savannah, to smaller news organizations in southern and northern Georgia. We interviewed lower-level personnel in the news organizations, such as reporters, to higher-level personnel, such as producers and editors, to determine how GDOT could better build the media's agenda.

Agenda Setting

Scholars have assessed First-Level Agenda Setting by asking individuals what "Most Important Problem (MIP)" they are facing. Scholars have used the MIP question, or some variation of it, in hundreds of studies to assess the salience of the media's agenda to the public's agenda. In our study, though, we actually focused on the media's agenda,

and the idea of agenda building. Therefore, we used a variation of the MIP question to assess the media's agenda, to determine what media practitioners think is the "most important problem" their audience is facing. Scholars usually ask the top three MIP to determine Agenda Setting. We asked media practitioners to assess what issues were their region is facing to determine if transportation was a major issue their audience is facing.

We asked media practitioners specifically (direct quotes):

1) "What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?"

2) "What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?" and

3) "What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?"

We also wanted to investigate why the issues the media practitioners discussed were the most important for their audience. So we asked them why the issues were the most important. Oftentimes, scholars have used these questions to address Second-Level Agenda Setting, in that when the media discuss certain attributes of issues, those attributes become salient in the public's mind. Scholars have asked individuals often why they listed a certain issue as the most important to then analyze the open-ended responses to determine the attributes used.

We used a similar method by asking media practitioners (direct quote from survey):

1) "Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?"

2) "Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the second most important?"

3) "Why do you feel that this is the third important issues faced by the state?

Why did you list this issue as the third most important?"

Scholars usually assess Agenda Setting by doing a survey of individuals and a content analysis of news organizations. Scholars usually do not interview media practitioners. However, since we had the opportunity to go to media practitioners directly, we chose to ask agenda-setting questions of media practitioners to determine if they felt transportation was a major issue in their region. We wanted to determine how important transportation issues were in different regions of the state. GDOT is integral to transportation across the region. Therefore, we wanted to directly address whether media practitioners found it as important as we do. We also wanted to determine if GDOT was on the media's agenda. Even if the media practitioners considered transportation a major issue that did not mean they always provided coverage to the state organizations. We then moved onto the theory of Agenda Building to determine how GDOT could better get on the media's agenda to help transfer to the public's agenda.

Agenda Building

Scholars have investigated Agenda Building as an extension of Agenda Setting. Whereas Agenda Setting focuses on how the media's agenda is transferred to the public's agenda, Agenda Building is how issues are placed on the media's agenda. GDOT would like to assist in building the media's agenda in order for the issues to transfer to the public's agenda. We assessed Agenda Building by speaking directly with media practitioners to determine what they would like to receive from GDOT in order for them to do a story about both GDOT in general as well as public meetings in particular. The

more stories media practitioners do about GDOT, the more likely the state organization will filter from the media's agenda to the public's agenda.

We first asked questions about information the media received from GDOT (see Table 28). We asked a closed-ended measure of "How often do you receive information from GDOT?".

Table 28. Communication received from GDOT

How Often Receive Communication	Percent
Daily	46.67 (7)
Weekly	6.67 (1)
Bi-weekly	26.67 (4)
Monthly	13.63 (2)
Yearly	6.67 (1)

*Raw number in parenthesis.

We then asked media practitioners open-ended measures to determine how they decide to do a story off the information. We asked media practitioners:

1) "Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?" and

2) "What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?"

However, we wanted to determine why media practitioners cover Public Meetings/Open Houses specifically. First, we asked a close-ended measure "Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?". (Table 29)

Table 29. Media Coverage provided for Public Meetings/Open Houses

How often do you cover Public Meetings/Open Houses	Percent
Never	7.14 (1)
Once in while	46.67 (7)
Quite a bit	33.33 (5)
Always	7.14 (1)

*Raw number in parenthesis.

We then asked open-ended measures to determine how media practitioners decide to do a story on Public Meetings/Open Houses held by GDOT.

We asked media practitioners:

1) "What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?" and

2) "What are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?"

GDOT is important to everyday life. However, media practitioners often are bombarded with information that they must choose from to determine what issues are important for their audience. Information that is placed in the media's agenda often gets picked up by the public. Therefore, it is integral to understand how to get information on the media's agenda. We asked open-ended measures to help to understand why the media choose to do stories on the state organization in general and about Public Meetings/Open Houses in particular. The questions will help to determine what GDOT can do to get on the media's agenda.

News Values

One of the reasons that GDOT might have to compete for attention with the media practitioners deals with news values. The media practitioners receive information every day from federal organizations, state organizations, and local organizations. All compete

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to get on the media's agenda. One reason a story might get chosen for coverage, while other stories do not get chosen, relate to news values. News values are general guidelines we use in journalism to help decide how much prominence is given to a story. Journalism and mass communication scholars have determined people have about 9 news values. We asked each media practitioner "Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd." We had 9 news values including Impact, Proximity, Timeliness, Prominence, Unusualness, Conflict, Currency, Affinity, and Human Interest.

Demographics

We surveyed different media practitioners around the state. We ensured to get media practitioners from smaller regions in the south and north to larger media organizations in the major cities. We interviewed newspaper practitioners, broadcasters, and radio personalities for the survey. We had a good mix with the gender of the participants (Table 30). The only issue was all the participants indicated they were Caucasian (Table 31). Unfortunately, according to the State of the Media report, the news media do not have a lot of diversity in newsrooms. The State of the Media is a survey completed by the Pew Research Center. In the 2016 survey, the organization found only 12 percent of newsrooms employ minority journalists.

Table 30. Gender of Media Practitioners

Gender	Percent
Male	53.33 (8)
Female	46.67 (7)

*Raw number in parenthesis.

Table 31. Race of Media Practitioners

Race	Percent
Caucasian	100 (15)
African-American	
Asian	
American Indian	
Hispanic or Latino	
Other	

*Raw number in parenthesis.

We had a good mix of participants with different jobs in the newsroom, from

Publisher and Executive Producer, which is the highest job in the field, to anchor or

reporter, which are the lowest jobs in the newsroom (Table 32).

Table 32. Job Title of Media Practitioners

Job Title	Percent
Publisher	6.67 (1)
Executive Producer	13.33 (2)
Editor	20.00 (3)
News Producer	6.67 (1)
Anchor	13.33 (2)
Reporter	20.00 (3)
Other	20.00 (3)

*Raw number in parenthesis.

5.3 Agenda Setting Findings

When assessing Agenda Setting, scholars often use the MIP question. This question has

been asked in surveys since 1935 by the Gallup Poll. We currently see the same or

similar questions asked in different polls, including, but not limited to the Pew Research

Center for People & the Press and the American National Election Survey. By definition,

we ask what is the most important problem, or ask what are the issues facing individuals.

The MIP question is negative in nature, so we are expecting negative results in that we

are asking about problems the region is facing. Media practitioners know what problems

their audience faces often understanding the region better than most because they are

exposed to different individuals. Media practitioners often understand the struggles their audiences undergo every day. So we asked media practitioners not what issues they felt were the most important, but what issues they felt were the most important their audience faced to assess First-Level Agenda Setting. We also asked why those issues were the most important to assess Second-Level Agenda Setting.

Our results indicated that less than half of the time, the media practitioners indicated transportation or traffic issues were one of the most important problems faced by their region. Of the media practitioners we interviewed, 6 out of 15 indicated transportation or traffic issues of major concern. When we investigated why they indicated transportation or traffic was a major concern, we found that media practitioners had several reasons to list transportation or traffic as a major issue. The media practitioners did not have a consensus about why transportation or traffic was a major issue.

Several media practitioners indicated that traffic problems often hinder their audience from driving around town. Even in the smaller areas, traffic issues can often cause problems for individuals, especially in high tourist regions. Media practitioners talked about how traffic issues can lead to residents being late for work, or other negative effects of traffic problems in their region. They also indicated issues with individuals getting into traffic accidents on the roads, which can cause more problems with traffic on the road. Media practitioners also discussed issues of traffic flow, and how some areas might have a larger amount of lights that hinder traffic flow. Overall, they indicated traffic issues were a major concern because it impacts people on a daily basis. Although GDOT works to help resolve traffic issues, the state organization does not have oversight

into increasing populations being on the roads that can cause traffic problems. Traffic accidents are not the fault of GDOT. Traffic flow might be related to GDOT or it might relate to local agencies. However, whenever individuals think about traffic issues, they often think about GDOT.

An area that is overseen by GDOT is transportation. Media practitioners also talked about transportation as a major issue in their region. Transportation included issues with roadways or design issues. Media practitioners discussed the issue of transportation in terms of how roads were constructed. They discussed how roads were designed and being re-designed were a major issue in their region. The Media practitioners felt that GDOT has done a good job in identifying road issues and assisting in designing them well. But when construction is on-going, it can cause issues in the region, especially with the length of projects.

Despite the fact that media practitioners indicated traffic or transportation as issues, they felt other issues were as important. GDOT is competing against other local issues that might impact whether media practitioners cover the state organization. Media practitioners indicated that traffic issues were a concern in their region, but they also discussed other issues that might push GDOT's agenda off the media's agenda, such as the economy. The economy often is a major issue, even at the national and international level. The economy is so pervasive in people's lives that it often is a major concern. Crime was a major issue especially for those living in the bigger cities. We have seen crime rising in one Georgia City, Savannah. Media practitioners discussed how they have to cover shootings and murders, which often can push other issues down farther on the media's agenda. When issues compete for attention, the competition will prevent other

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important issues from being put on the agenda. There is only so much news that the news practitioners can focus on in a given day. The media often will look at what issues they feel are the most important for their audience, and focus on those issues. Other issues fall by the wayside. GDOT is competing against these local issues when it is trying to get on the media's agenda. So GDOT needs to cater to what the news practitioners want in order to help it building the media's agenda. So we asked media practitioners what GDOT could do to help them in their reporting.

5.4 Agenda Building Findings – GDOT in General

We first asked media practitioners about whether they received information from GDOT, as well as whether they did a story on the information they received. We also asked what GDOT could do to make media practitioners more likely to do a story on information sent from GDOT. Media practitioners receive so many press releases a week, often press releases are dismissed if there is no local connection. Media practitioners indicated they receive information from GDOT every week. Media practitioners also indicated they often received press releases from GDOT that did not impact their local community. If a press release does not impact the local community, it often is disregarded. Media practitioners discussed how they might receive press releases with information that does not pertain to their local community. They discount information that is not local or impacts the local audience. For example, media practitioners discussed how a project in Atlanta does not impact southern Georgia. Media practitioners do not have time to write stories about issues in Atlanta when they work in southern Georgia, unless the information coming from Atlanta directly relates to their local audience. They mentioned

that they often look at the title to press releases to determine if they impact their local community. If not, they often disregard that information.

However, media practitioners often did stories on GDOT when the information was local and impacted the local audience. So GDOT might consider finding out from local media practitioners what information they would like, and focus its message on those areas specifically. In other words, instead of sending out blanket press releases to all practitioners around the state, GDOT might consider focusing only on press releases in certain regions. Instead of sending out a press release to all practitioners around the state, only send press releases when it is a project in a media practitioners' area. Localizing press releases might help as well. Localizing means telling the media practitioners why their local region might care about a project. For example, explaining to the media in a small town why a project in Savannah might relate to their audience might make it more likely for the press release to get picked up in that small town.

Besides focusing press releases, media practitioners indicated there were things GDOT could send along with press releases to help media practitioners cover a story. By helping media practitioners cover a story, GDOT, in essence, is assisting the media in building the media's agenda. Media practitioners indicated GDOT could send specific information in different formats to help them cover a story. Newspapers often need printed material. They often need good direct quotes, and all the information in a written format. However, since most news organizations have an online component, newspapers could use images and videos to put online. Broadcasters need images and videos. This is important especially if projects have 3-D imaging on the projects. It will help them provide coverage. If cost is an issue, GDOT could make these images and videos

available online on its website, with the ability for media practitioners to download and

use for their own stories. One radio personality indicated that GDOT could send out

sound bites with its press releases. Since Public Relations (PR) Practitioners with GDOT

often do interviews with their experts, they could record those interviews and make them

available to the radio personality quickly.

Media practitioners want to have all the information present in the press release in

order to do a story. Media practitioners often have several stories they are working on at a

time. They often lack the personnel to do extra work. So providing those sound bites or

other small bits of information will help media practitioners to provide coverage. They

are less likely to do a story if they see a press release is lacking information. Several of

the media practitioners we talked with indicated personnel issues often hinder them from

providing coverage to every story they would like to provide coverage to, including

GDOT. Newsrooms often lack personnel to take on complicated stories. Giving media

practitioners all of the information might help them do the story.

We also asked what would make media practitioners do a story on GDOT. They

all agreed that they are more likely to do a story if the information was relevant to their

local audience, and if it impacted a large number of people in their coverage area. Media

practitioners provide coverage of a local community. They often do not provide

information for state or federal issues, unless it directly ties to the local community.

Media practitioners talked about how they receive press releases that do not impact their

local audience. For example, one practitioner who worked in a small community in

southern Georgia indicated he often received press releases about work in Savannah.

Unless the work was occurring on the interstate, he indicated, his news organization did

not provide coverage. In other words, unless it was a story about work on I-16 or I-95, he did not provide coverage because his local audience would not care. Media practitioners often provide hyperlocal coverage. So people in a small community an hour from Savannah will not cover events in Savannah unless it directly impacts their audience. GDOT could show local media how something impacts the local audience by focusing the press release to certain news organizations. However, GDOT is understaffed and the communication department might not have time to focus on press releases on each local community. GDOT might want to limit the press releases sent out to local news organizations to only those press releases that impact the local audience. GDOT also might want to communicate directly with local media to find out what information the local media want as well as what information they do not want. Working together will help to get information into the media's agenda. Media practitioners asked for additional information to be added to the information coming into their offices. By adding additional information, media practitioners indicated that they would be more likely to do stories on press releases coming into their office.

Besides focusing on impact, media practitioners asked for specific information sent with press releases in order for them to do a story. Media practitioners indicated they wanted to know more about the funding/finances for major projects. GDOT does so many projects that have costs associated with them. These projects are integral to the overall success of projects. Media practitioners indicated that the cost of projects, as well as where the funding is coming from, will help in their overall coverage of projects going on in their community. Media practitioners also asked for more information on new projects that might be upcoming in the regions. GDOT often has planned projects for several

years out. Media practitioners indicated they would like more information on future projects so they can start providing coverage to their audience earlier. By putting a project on the media's agenda earlier, the media might be more willing to provide coverage when there are updates on the project.

This finding is interesting since we found similar results in Task 2, where individuals in survey results indicated they wanted to know about projects earlier. Although GDOT feels it is involving individuals and media practitioners earlier, both groups have indicated they feel left out of the process. Media practitioners also indicated they wanted contact information for experts that they can talk with. Most press releases have contact information for the communication department. But media practitioners do not want to talk with communication people. They want to talk with the engineers who are developing the projects. Make information available to the media from experts about the importance of projects and why the projects must be designed a certain way, or why projects are being done. This will help show the importance of certain projects.

Overall, the media practitioners indicated that GDOT has done well in reaching out to the media about important projects in the state. Media practitioners indicated they had a positive relationship with GDOT and the communication department, and they felt that GDOT does a good job in keeping the media up-to-date on projects in their region. They also indicated that they liked the "Project see" window that GDOT provides. Overall, the media practitioners felt with some alterations to information coming in, they might be more willing to provide coverage of GDOT and projects that the state organization is doing. By putting information on the media's agenda, it will automatically filter to the public's agenda.

5.5 Agenda Building Findings – Public Meetings

Media Practitioners indicated that GDOT has done a good job on informing them about public meetings going on in their area. Media practitioners appreciate receiving the information regarding public meetings. It helps shape their news coverage for the day/week of the public meetings. However, the media practitioners did indicate that they had a few issues that might help them provide more coverage of public meetings that GDOT has when the state organization is discussing projects.

First and foremost, again, media practitioners indicated they want information that is relevant to their audience and localized. Small news organizations will not travel an hour to get to an open house that does not impact their local readers. News organizations often feel that if individuals in their local area want to know about another area, they will turn to news organizations in that region. So people in southern Georgia will go to Savannah news organizations for Savannah news. The smaller towns do not have the personnel or time to provide coverage of Savannah unless it directly impacts their audience. Media practitioners indicated that GDOT needed to focus on only local public meetings and make sure the public meetings are relevant to the local community. If the local meetings do not impact the local audience, the media practitioners will disregard the information.

Media Practitioners also indicated the time of the meetings are a problem. They prefer to have meetings during the workday. The issue is that since they have to do stories on the meetings when they get back to the office, they prefer having them during the day. However, they did indicate that could be a problem for individuals getting to the meetings, which we found in Task 2's survey. They indicated they liked GDOT having

two meetings that they might attend because it helps shape their coverage. They might attend the first meeting, and avoid the second. Broadcasters can do a 6 O'clock news story on the meeting; however, with meetings planned during the day and from 4 to 6 p.m., by the time the story runs, the meetings are already over. Having one meeting slightly later in the evening might help if broadcasters and radio personalities promote meetings in advance.

Besides the timing of the meetings, one broadcaster mentioned the location of meetings. She indicated that meeting nearer the location of the project, especially for a broadcaster, might help showcase the issues. She wondered if even having GDOT do a "tour" of the area for local media to showcase the issues might help to provide coverage. For example, she discussed a major project in her region where GDOT was doing construction on a two-lane road to make it a four-lane road. She wondered if GDOT might take media practitioners out to the area before construction to showcase the issues might help her and her audience understand the problems and the necessity of the project.

Media practitioners also indicated they wanted information ahead of time. They also wanted more information sent before the meeting to help shape their coverage overall of public meetings. Media practitioners indicated that sometimes they are not informed of meetings even if the meeting is local. They learn about the meeting by reading the legal notices in their newspaper that GDOT might have placed in the legal section. Media practitioners requested that GDOT let them know about meetings at least a week ahead of time to help them determine if they can provide coverage. They indicated that GDOT probably knows about the meetings more than a week prior, so giving the media practitioners advance notifications will help shape their coverage.

Media practitioners indicated that because of staffing issues, they often do not have time to cover everything in their area. If they know about a public meeting ahead of time, they are more likely to provide coverage. Media practitioners also indicated that giving them advanced notification means they might be able to do a pre-story on the meeting to let individuals in their region know about the meeting coming up. Media practitioners also asked that GDOT make certain things available before the meeting. GDOT does such a good job in doing maps and graphs, and even simulations for the meeting. Media practitioners wanted those items made available before the meeting to help them understand the importance and what is happening at the meeting. Making items available ahead of the meeting will help media practitioners to understand the importance of a project and the purpose of GDOT having the meeting about the project.

Overall, though, the media practitioners indicated they felt GDOT did a good job on public meetings. They had less comments about the public meetings as they had about GDOT and the information in general. GDOT works well overall with media practitioners, but by making small changes, the state organization might be able to get information into the media's agenda.

5.6 News Values

Media practitioners have news values that they use to determine whether they are going to do a story about a certain issue. These news values, often called Editorial Judgements, are taught in journalism programs around the country. They are used in textbooks, as well as scholarly sources to determine how stories are chosen to be covered by media practitioners.

When a news source can focus information using the news values, the news media practitioners are more likely to do a story. Therefore, it is integral for those trying to get on the media's agenda to tailor information using news values. The more news values a story has, the more likely media practitioners are to do a story.

Table 33. News Values indicated by Media Practitioners

News Values	Percent
Impact	33.33 (14)
Proximity	23.81 (10)
Timeliness	16.67 (7)
Prominence	4.76 (2)
Usualness	2.38 (1)
Conflict	4.76 (2)
Currency	9.52 (4)
Affinity	
Human Interest	4.76 (2)

*Raw number in parenthesis.

We asked media practitioners for the top 3 news values that were the most important for them in deciding whether or not to cover a story (Table 33). Many of the practitioners talked about impact. The stories must have impact on their local audience. The more people a story impacts, the more likely the media practitioners are to do a story. Reworking a bridge that only impacts a small amount of residents will not get coverage. Redoing a major road in town will impact a lot of people. So media practitioners will look at how something impacts their local audience. Many of the practitioners also talked about how a story has to have proximity. This means that the story has to deal with something in their local community. If a story is not happening in their local community, they are more likely to disregard the information.

Many of the practitioners talked about timeliness. A story has to be timely. It has to be new. If a project does not have any new updates, the news practitioners are not going to do a story. If there are updates, then the news media practitioners are more likely

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to do a story. Many of the practitioners talked about currency as well. Unlike timeliness, currency refers to the idea that the issue is current. For example, a current issue might be an issue that has been in the news for six months, but is still of concern to the audience. Prominence, conflict, and usualness also received nods from media practitioners. Prominence involves individuals prominent in the community or state. Conflict involves some type of issue that is causing controversy in the region. Unusualness involves something that is out of the norm. Media practitioners also talked about how news stories have to have human interest. Stories must have a human element, explaining how the story is important for humans. So focusing on the human element, and the reason a project is important to individuals in a region, might help for a media practitioner to provide coverage.

GDOT works well with the media overall. However, GDOT might work to ensure press releases and information have news values focused for the media. By having news values present in the press release and other information, media practitioners might be more willing to do stories on the information.

5.7 Conclusion and Recommendations for GDOT

Media practitioners across the state were interviewed for this portion of the project. We chose media practitioners from all media, including newspapers, broadcast stations, and radio. We talked with them about the importance of GDOT in their overall coverage of issues in their area. Several themes emerged when talking to media practitioners. First and foremost, the media practitioners talked about how GDOT needed to focus coverage on their circulation area. Media practitioners provide local coverage. They do not provide coverage of issues or events going on in the state unless it is relevant to their audience.

GDOT needs to focus information for media practitioners on their local coverage area. For example, do not send information on projects or public meetings in Atlanta to places outside of Atlanta. News organizations are looking for information relevant to their local community.

Media practitioners also discussed the need for more information when receiving information from GDOT. They asked that GDOT send out information prior to meetings about projects so media practitioners can understand why the project is so important for their audience. Also, GDOT should make information available that media practitioners need to do their job. Media practitioners indicated that personnel shortages have made it harder for them to provide coverage of different projects. GDOT can assist by making available more information, such as graphics, maps, videos, or soundbites to help media practitioners do their jobs.

By reaching out to media practitioners and giving them what they want, GDOT might be more successful in getting on the media's agenda. Being on the media's agenda can transfer then to the public's agenda. Agenda building is how organizations can build the media's agenda. The media's agenda often is created by the media deciding what issues are prevalent for their audience to understand. By focusing attention on things like news values and hyperlocal coverage, organizations can impact the media's agenda. Overall, though, most of the media practitioners were very positive toward their feelings of GDOT and the work GDOT does. The media practitioners felt they had a good working relationship with GDOT and its personnel. They also indicated they felt GDOT, overall, was doing a good job. They indicated that with some changes to press releases or public meetings/open houses, they might be willing to provide more coverage. The ideas

here are just to help get more information into the media's agenda, which then might

filter to the public's agenda.

CHAPTER 6. US DOT STRATEGY VERSUS OTHER STATE DOTS BEST PRACTICES

An investigation was performed on the best practices and systematic messaging strategies suggested by United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) and other state transportation agencies. To ensure proactive messaging and better strategies for communication and participation in meetings, these techniques have been investigated and the results have been included in the present Guide (this final report). The Guide also includes strategies for communicating project information to the public, a recommended timeline for messaging, and a variety of measures to determine the successfulness of the strategies.

6.1 US DOT versus Other State DOTs Matrix

A matrix was created to compare public involvement of the Unites States Department of Transportation to State Transportation Agencies. The agencies were listed on the vertical axis, and public involvement techniques suggested by US DOT were listed on the horizontal axis. The results of this matrix were found by searching public involvement guides/plans and transportation agency websites pertaining to each individual state. This method was extensive and efficient; however, there were agencies with limited public involvement information; some of their public involvement plans were outdated or nonexistent. This matrix consisted of four categories of techniques defined by the United States Department of Transportation: "Informing People Through Outreach and Organization," "Involving People Face-to-Face Through Meetings," "Getting Feedback from Participants," and "Using Special Techniques to Enhance Participation."

6.2 Systematic Messaging Strategies

The effectiveness of systematic messaging strategies must identify a transportation agency's goals, stakeholders, and public concerns. Once these are identified, the needs and resources for an agency's public involvement will be assessed, documented, and evaluated. There were three areas in which these strategies were found from identified themes in Chapter 3, the visualization techniques in Chapter 4, and the matrix in this chapter that compared the state DOTs to US DOT techniques. Relative to this matrix (and as noted in Appendix D) when one technique was identified for one particular state, it was marked with "1", and when the technique has not been identified, it was marked with"0".

The messaging strategies that are recommended from the themes found in Chapter 3 are:

- Early communication and project explanations to the public prior to meetings

- Valuing input and generating early feedback from the public. Also providing phase updates on the project based on their input and feedback

- Posting meeting information, agendas, and other materials prior to the meetings. Also reminding the public where this information is posted and how to access it

- Providing effective advertisements for meetings and events by billboards and signs

- Providing alternative forms of participation in meetings

- Providing meetings at times and locations most convenient for the public

The visualization strategies that are recommended from the findings in Chapter 4 are:

- The use of narrated videos and drive through simulations on projects on social media

- Broadcasting project information and/or potential traffic disruptions on the television or radio

- Posting documentary videos on the DOT website about the history of existing structures and/or explaining their modifications, reconstructions, demolitions and new projects

- Providing information and materials in alternative languages on the internet and at meetings/events

- Provide a "Newsroom Page" on DOT website to publish public information and involvement opportunities. This page could also serve as a place to upload presentations, videos, and updates from meetings

- Provide the public with information on where their taxes are spent relative to state projects

The state transportation agencies were observed and documented in accordance to the suggested US DOT practices. The most used messaging strategies were:

- Informing people in alternative languages, communicating with leaders/groups/organizations, hosting meetings and events in accessible locations, and providing information materials in accessible formats

- Involving the public in face-to-face meetings by hosting public meetings/hearings, and open houses

- Generating feedback by providing information on project websites and using focus groups to solicit viewpoints and resolve differences

- Using special techniques to enhance participation; such as, publicizing meeting through other groups, engaging with schools, establishing info networks by word

of mouth, developing logos/slogans, offering alternative modes of participation, including high -level senior staff, evaluating efforts, following-up, and inviting key individuals

INFORMING PEOPLE THROUGH OUTREACH AND ORGANIZATION

A precise public involvement plan produces valuable input in decision-making; the considered variables that create a plan informing the public are through organization and outreach. The recommended approach of organization and outreach are to include people underserved by population, bring together a core participation group, provide practical information and establish methods of communication.

All of the state transportation agencies (100%) are providing alternative languages, communicating with community leaders/groups/organizations, hosting public meetings in accessible locations, and providing materials in accessible formats. Core participants are also being brought together by 98% of agencies working with community organizations and 94% working with civic advisory committees. Methods of communication were established by the use of videos or phones. Also information materials (ads, brochures, newsletters, etc.) were provided by all transportation agencies (100%). The detailed findings can be observed in Appendix D.1.

INVOLVING PEOPLE FACE-TO-FACE THROUGH MEETINGS

People want and enjoy opportunities to discuss agency programs and plans. Meetings are considered to be a complex component of involvement that exercise two-ways communication. This type of communication often liberates the differences amongst agencies and the public depending on the circumstances depending on the type of meeting and the way it is organized. There are various interactions that a transportation

agency can have to involve people face-to face; however, all transportation agencies

(100%) are using public meetings, 98% use public hearings, and 96% use open houses.

These meetings to involve the public face-to-face use organizing features such as

brainstorming, visioning, or small groups. Brainstorming is used by 67% of the agencies

and small group techniques are used by 65% of them. More on these findings can be seen

in Appendix D.2.

GETTING FEEDBACK

Public involvement programs stimulate feedback that provides new ideas and

perspectives; therefore, the level of public trust and knowledge is communicated on

issues and projects. Feedback is beneficial to transportation agencies because it assists in

decisions that meet public requests; however, methods of obtaining feedback can be

improved by providing information and designing programs that value public perspective

and resolve differences. Information for the public is provided on project websites by

94% of agencies, and 88% on hotlines. Community viewpoints are heard by 94% of

agencies through focus groups, and 86% of agencies through public opinion surveys.

These findings can be seen in Appendix D.3.

USING SPECIAL TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION

Public involvement programs look to involve the largest portion of society; however,

traditional methods often involve a smaller portion. A program in need of enhancement

will experience a decline in attendance, a lack in participation, and/or an expressed

concern of progress; however, special techniques can be used to renew the enthusiasm of

an agency and create more stimulating efforts to attract people that do not usually

participate. Special techniques to enhance participation may include hosting special events, changing a meeting approach, and/or discovering new communication methods.

The most common special events held by 92% of transportation agencies are games and/or contests; however, a change in a meeting approach is a less common strategy used to enhance participation. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of agencies are using site visits as a new approach and 22% meet in nontraditional places such as the mall or county fairs. Communication is essential between the agency and the public; therefore, all of the transportation agencies are using special techniques to enhance participation. The following techniques are being used by all the transportation agencies: publicizing meeting through other groups, engaging with schools, establishing information networks by word of mouth, developing logos/slogans, offering alternative modes of participation, including high -level senior staff, evaluating efforts, following-up, and inviting key individuals. All these findings can be further studied in Appendix D.4.

6.3 Recommended Timeline for Messaging and Measures to Determine the Success of the Strategies

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE

The research team acknowledges from the Office of Environmental Services (OES), as described in Chapter 7, that projects are classified as scale in simple, medium and difficult or complex for the purpose of being presented in Public Information Open Houses. Based on projects' natures, these major categories may include the following kind of projects (it is not an all-inclusive list and it is dependent on the magnitude of the project type):

- simple: roundabouts, lighting, etc.

- simple to medium: turning/passing lanes, multi-use trails

- medium: streetscapes, etc.

- medium to complex: widening/reconstruction, small bridges

- complex: bridge replacements, interchanges, major improvement/reconstruction

The messaging strategies identified according to the themes in Chapter 3 and their recommended timeline are construed below:

- Early communication and project explanations to the public prior to meetings: offer option of virtual meeting and project information available on social media or on GDOT website (outreach area) before the actual programmatic meeting

- Generate early feedback from the public, provide phase updates on the project based on their input and feedback: as early as possible with each development of a new phase for any particular projects

- Post meeting information, agendas, and other materials prior to the meetings: at least one month before. Also remind the public where this information is posted and how to access it during the meeting: at least two times before the actual meeting through online and social media means

- Provide effective advertisements for meetings and events by billboards and visible signs: minimum 10 days before the meeting

- Provide alternative forms of participation and interaction in meetings, use virtual meetings, publicize the use of social media for the projects and GDOT dedicated public outreach area of the website: during early design phase

- Provide meetings at times and locations most convenient for the public: evenings, after 5 pm and at locations which are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) approved facilities, schools or government agency spaces

MEASURES OF DETERMINING SUCCESS

A summary of themes was identified in Chapter 3 in regard to the Georgia Department of Transportation and its residents. The recommendations made from the themes can be measured with a quantitative or qualitative scale for success. The quantitative measures for GDOT have often included attendance, number of acquired entries in an existing mailing list, website activity, evaluation of participation and responses, and a listing of publications; however, the qualitative measures for GDOT often include a survey of staff and/or participants concerning their opinions and impressions. The measures of success for each theme proposed for in this Guide (final report) can be found below:

1. The public wants a better explanation of projects before public meetings

    a. The success of early communication can be measured by how many people were involved prior to and after the meeting

    b. The success of accessible documents can be measured by how many times the documents were viewed or downloaded in relation to an individual's attendance and participation

2. The public thinks the meetings are a waste of time

    a. The success of early feedback can be measured by how many relevant and non-relevant comments are received in comparison to when feedback is requested

b. The success of updates on the phase of the project can be measured by an individual's participation and engagement for the duration of the project. Measure the participation at the beginning of the project until the end and evaluate the numbers and frequency of those associated with the project

3. The public wants accessible information online prior to the meetings

   a. The success of reminding the public where information can be found is through social media accounts, email subscriptions, apps on mobile devices, etc. and can be measured by the amount of information requested by interested individuals prior and post meetings

4. The public wants GDOT to advertise the meetings better

   a. The success of billboards and signage can be measured by the increase or decrease in feedback or appearances

5. The public requested alternative forms of participation in meetings

   a. The success of virtual meetings can be measured by the number of alternatives offered, and whether or not there is an increase or decrease in engagement (tracking mechanism can be established with the offered alternative)

   b. Social media accounts can be used for Q & A, and the success of this can be measured by the amount of online interaction with the post or the participant

6. The public wants more convenient times and location for meetings

   a. The success of surveying and moving a meeting can be measured by the number of people that are available at a different time and location

b. Feedback on preferred time and location can be documented for scheduling a meeting at the public's convenience

7. The time spent waiting for a response at public meetings and Open Houses

   a. The average time a crowd of participants were witnessed to have stayed "in-line" for addressing a question and then receiving an answer

   b. Short 10-15 minutes overall presentation about the project may potentially eliminate the time spent waiting for responses from GDOT personnel. Follow-up questions should be documented; suggestions should be taken into account to improve on the next presentations

8. The interpersonal experience the public has at a meeting or public event

   a. The number of positive responses of the preliminary survey

As expressed in Section 3.6 of this report, the authors recommended that for complex projects GDOT makes short 15 or 30 minutes repeated presentations on the major aspects of the involved project. Depending on the complexity of the project, this should be repeated every hour, or preferably every half hour, during the total length of the Public Meeting. The content of the presentation would be dependent on the stage of the project. If the project is in design stage, it is fairly complex and has more visuals presented during the meeting, it would be beneficial for public in attendance to watch first a general presentation including project overview and major facts and/or critical components of the respective project. If the project is during early design stages, the presentation should include alternative solutions to the problem that is being addressed. Also, the presentations should include not only the geometric aspects of the project, but also their main benefits such as traffic improvements, safety enhancements, economic benefits for

the region resulted from certain advantages created by the proposed project, etc. These repeated presentations could avoid individuals' negative feelings on arrival to the meetings by observing that GDOT personnel are already in the process of verbally explaining the project details to other attending citizens.

To measure public satisfaction with their participation in Public Meetings, it is proposed to employ preliminary and exit short surveys. The preliminary survey may consist of questions as the ones depicted below:

(1) Do you feel welcomed at today's PIOH?

(2) Are the personnel enthusiastic about presenting today's project?

(3) Are the GDOT personnel or consultant explaining project details to you in laymen terms?

(4) Are you provided with a summary of the key facts about the project?

The short exit survey may contain a few items addressing questions such as the following ones:

(1) Do you think your provided feedback would be considered?

(2) Were your questions/doubts answered/clarified today?

(3) Did you receive useful information today?

(4) Was your invested time in this meeting beneficial?

To quickly answer these questions, it is suggested to use a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 points, where 3 points would be considered neutral.

CHAPTER 7. OPEN HOUSES RESOURCE EFFECTIVENESS AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Refining Conventional Practices

According to this task in the research project, the use of resources and staff accumulates a substantial cost at Public Meetings and Open Houses. Therefore, recommendations are necessary for the anticipated costs associated with refining conventional practices currently in use and determining early in the planning process which projects are candidates requiring proactive messaging. The GDOT document titled "Public Involvement Plan for NEPA Projects 2016" was released during August 2016 to the GDOT website (http://www.dot.ga.gov/PartnerSmart/DesignManuals/Environmental/Public%20Involvement%20Plan/PublicInvolvementPlan.pdf). The Georgia DOT has established the various stakeholders' responsibilities with respect to Public Involvement activities. These responsibilities are outlined below:

Project Manager Responsibilities:

1.   Contact OEL Public Involvement Coordinator to have Open House scheduled.

2.   Provide displays and fact sheet for Dry Run and meeting.

3.   Attend Dry Run.

4.   Attend Open House.

NEPA Analyst Responsibilities:

1.   Prepare advertisement.

2.   Coordinate with District Planning Programming Engineer (DPPE) on placement of signs.

3. Submit advertisement for review to the Project Manager and Office of Environmental Services Public Involvement Coordinator (PIC).

4. Submit advertisement for the newspaper to the DPPE upon approval from Project Manager and PIC.

5. Prepare handout for Dry Run and meeting.

6. Conduct Dry Run.

7. Attend meeting. Be sure to take the following to the meeting at a minimum:

    a. Comment deadline sign (Office Head sign)

    b. Comment box

    c. Court Reporter Sign

    d. Title VI Sign and handouts

    e. Elected Official Sign In Sheet

    f. Easels/sign holders

    g. Pens/Crayons/Misc. meeting materials/counter

    h. Draft Environmental Assessment if hearing (3 copies)

District Planning and Programming Engineer (DPPE) Responsibilities:

1. Book meeting facility:

    a. Facility must be ADA compliant.

    b. Should be within or close to the project corridor.

2. Order and install roadway advertisement signs.

3. Reserve the Court Reporter.

4. Mail meeting notifications to local officials and agencies/organizations affected by the project.

5.   Provide roadway sign location map and pictures to NEPA Analyst.

6.   Run the meeting advertisement in legal organization.

7.   Install directional signs to meeting.

8.   All other meeting coordination as needed.

9.   Attend all meetings and Dry Runs.

Public Involvement Coordinator (PIC) Responsibilities:

1.   Notify District Planning Programming Engineer (DPPE) of meeting request.

   a.   Forward meeting request (email and/or hard copy)

   b.   Confirm receipt (phone call and/or email)

   c.   Schedule Dry Run

      i.   Coordinate with Project Manager, NEPA, DPPE as needed

      ii.   Send out electronic meeting request

   d.   Send out electronic meeting request to project team once meeting details are finalized

   e.   Maintain Internal Public Outreach Calendar

   f.   Provide monthly meeting information to Department's external calendar webmaster

   g.   Assist as needed in coordinating public meetings

Consultant Responsibilities:

Consultant firms may be responsible for any/all activities above as per contract.

The Office of Environmental Services (OES) provided a conceptual cost estimate of current conventional practices of man-hours dedicated to activities to prepare for Open Houses. Also, OES shared its planning and organizing process with the research team.

The costs provided are only estimated costs associated with OES Public Involvement process. The estimated costs are categorized as simple, medium or difficult (or complex) depending on the expected difficulty of the project. Tables 34 – 36 illustrate the work hours and coordination activities needed for simple, medium and difficult (complex) projects. The numbers in the tables represent caps on the man hours needed for each task. The total cost is based on an approximate cost of close to $100 per hour. The man hour estimates should be examined to determine if any additional savings can be made by reducing the total in any category for the various types of projects ("EJ" in all these tables means "Environmental Justice").

Table 34. Estimated Costs associated with OES Public Involvement Activities for a Simple Project

Public Involvement	Assumptions	Work Hours
		68
NEPA		0
Cooordination		8
Prepare Public Involvement Plan		0
Prepare for, Lead, and Document Public Information Open House		48
Prepare for, Lead, and Document Public Hearing Open House		
Organize and Conduct a Citizen's Advisory Committee		0
Organize and Conduct Special Meetings	Assumes up to 4 meetings with stakeholders, local government, and/or EJ communities	
Plan, Prepare for, Conduct Charrette		0
Prepare, Distribute Meeting Flyers		0
Prepare, Distribute Newsletters		0
Prepare, Host, Maintain Website		0
Prepare, Provie Materials for GDOT Website		4
Prepare, Distribute News Releases		8
Prepare, Publish Advertisements		0
Setup, Operate Hotline		0
Hold Meetings, Conversations with Individual Property Owners		0
	TOTAL COST --->	$6,855.00

Table 35. Estimated Costs associated with OES Public Involvement Activities for a Medium Project

Public Involvement	Assumptions	Work Hours
		276
NEPA		0
Cooordination		20
Prepare Public Involvement Plan		0
Prepare for, Lead, and Document Public Information Open House		64
Prepare for, Lead, and Document Public Hearing Open House		
Organize and Conduct a Citizen's Advisory Committee		72
Organize and Conduct Special Meetings	Assumes up to 4 meetings with stakeholders, local government, and/or EJ communities	48
Plan, Prepare for, Conduct Charrette		0
Prepare, Distribute Meeting Flyers		36
Prepare, Distribute Newsletters		0
Prepare, Host, Maintain Website		0
Prepare, Provie Materials for GDOT Website		4
Prepare, Distribute News Releases		8
Prepare, Publish Advertisements		0
Setup, Operate Hotline		0
Hold Meetings, Conversations with Individual Property Owners		24
	TOTAL COST --->	$27,945.00

Table 36. Estimated Costs associated with OES Public Involvement Activities for a Complex Project

Public Involvement	Assumptions	Work Hours
		396
NEPA		20
Cooordination		20
Prepare Public Involvement Plan		0
Prepare for, Lead, and Document Public Information Open House		64
Prepare for, Lead, and Document Public Hearing Open House		120
Organize and Conduct a Citizen's Advisory Committee		72
Organize and Conduct Special Meetings	Assumes up to 4 meetings with stakeholders, local government, and/or EJ communities	48
Plan, Prepare for, Conduct Charrette		0
Prepare, Distribute Meeting Flyers		36
Prepare, Distribute Newsletters		0
Prepare, Host, Maintain Website		0
Prepare, Provie Materials for GDOT Website		4
Prepare, Distribute News Releases		8
Prepare, Publish Advertisements		0
Setup, Operate Hotline		0
Hold Meetings, Conversations with Individual Property Owners		24
	TOTAL COST --->	$40,095.00

7.2 Recommendations for Potential Savings and Increased Participation in Open Houses

Open Houses held in conjunction with public meeting/hearing will benefit from the use of shared resources, which may generate potential savings. Additional recommendations for cost savings and increased participation include:

- Use of consultants (their contribution is helpful during complex projects); they also are responsible for many public involvement activities that may generate savings especially during difficult and extensive projects

- Use of neutral spaces (publicly-owned sites help keep costs down); examples include city halls and public libraries, various community associations, schools and churches' social halls

- Use of dedicated YouTube channels for Public meeting/Open Houses

- Add incentives such as prizes or contests for greater involvement and participation

- Advertise meetings through channels that have little to no cost such as Facebook and the web site as well as billboards

The activities suggested above are supported by the finding of our surveys of the public and the other state DOTs. Based on the findings of the survey of other state DOTs, schools (87%), government agency spaces (76%) and libraries (56%) were the most effective venues for public meetings. In addition, other state DOTs said that people find information mostly online (88%), as opposed to face-to-face (7%), and that the most effective form of advertising was their web site (83%), social media (82%) and the newspaper (71%). As the first two are free, they should be used the most to advertise with little to no cost to GDOT.

Respondents in the survey of the public noted that the use of incentives would encourage participation and that people would attend virtual meetings. They also mentioned the use of Facebook and the web site for question and answer sessions. There were numerous comments from respondents claiming that they didn't know about the meetings and suggesting that GDOT advertise more. To reach people impacted, especially since some that are affected do not necessarily live in the area, we recommend that GDOT use billboards and signage that is easy to read while driving in the proposed

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project areas. As findings in Chapter 2 suggested, online is the most effective place for the public to find information and websites are the most effective advertisements. As locations, the findings show schools as the most effective venues for public meetings and hearings and face-to-face as the most effective method for obtaining public feedback.

The research team has found that currently, there is not a single person that has ownership of digital media content and development for public outreach and there is no dedicated public involvement/public media staff in the Office of Environmental Services (OES). The research team is recommending that a staff position could be created to serve this need. Creation of a position for public outreach and public involvement may seem like it would increase cost. However, in the long run, this may increase savings as there would be a single position of responsibility for these activities held by a person with expertise in the field. This could increase the effectiveness of public outreach and involvement, reduce duplication of efforts across departments and potentially reduce costs by having one person responsible for examining and reducing costs and improving effectiveness of public outreach and involvement. The position could reside in the Office of Environmental Services, the Office of Communication, the Office of Program Delivery or a combination of any of the aforementioned offices. Similar examples provided by other state departments of transportation are positions like "Public Information Officer", "Communications Specialist", or "Public Affairs Specialist" as offered in District of Columbia or Montana State DOT. Their organizational charts can be found at

https://ddot.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddot/publication/attachments/DDOT%20Org%20Chart%20External%20Use%2012-16.pdf and respectively at the following site

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/dir/orgchart.pdf. More information

regarding the staff and media contacts can be consulted at https://ddot.dc.gov/page/for-media for District of Columbia Department of Transportation. Also, Montana's public

information and involvement contacts can be found at the following website:

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/organization/director.shtml.

To better understand inefficiencies that exist and where the new staff position

should reside, a study of office organizational charts for offices involved in Public

Involvement should be done. People's responsibilities and duties should be outlined and

examined to ensure there is not duplication of efforts. Once duties and responsibilities are

clearly delineated, possibilities for savings can be identified. GDOT does outreach to

underserved populations (e.g. low-income, etc.) and it should be also considered in the

process with potential savings. Involving a greater number of people from underserved

populations will assure that the respective projects are context-sensitive and addressing

local issues/concerns as well as neighborhood values. Through effective means and

methods suggested in this Guide (final report), activities to reach underserved populations

may be allocated with lower costs.

To generate additional savings within the communication's office, other forms of

engagement should be considered. These may include:

- Improve communication and relationships with the media (see section 7.3 for
  more information on this; this may be incorporated as a required responsibility for
  the new designated individual responsible for PIOH),

- Update speeches and presentations,

- Increase presence on social media,

- Increase communication via the web site (enhance the information on the public outreach area according to the suggestions provided in chapter 4),

- Increase grassroots community relations outreach,

- Increase usage of public involvement consultants or Subject Matter Experts to ensure materials production is of the highest editorial and design standards.

Many of the respondents of the public survey discussed in Chapter 3 also mentioned that the locations and times of meetings are not convenient. Therefore, to increase participation, GDOT should investigate more convenient locations (such as schools and churches outside of high traffic, hard to reach locations) and more convenient times (later in the evening providing attendees sufficient travel time).

By identifying major themes on Public Trust and Political Knowledge (as described in Table 27 of this report), GDOT focus for future projects should be on how to get individuals more involved in Public Meetings/Open Houses. By getting people to trust the agency, as well as by getting them educated about the work GDOT does, the agency should see an increase of political participation and therefore in greater attendance and participation at public meetings. Regarding agenda setting, media practitioners indicated that traffic issues were a concern in their region, but they also discussed other issues that might push GDOT's agenda off the media's agenda, such as crimes and the economy. Therefore, GDOT needs to cater information news practitioners want in order to help building the media's agenda. Relative to agenda building, GDOT does a great job in creating maps, graphs, simulations and other visuals for the public meetings. Media practitioners suggested those items be made available before the meetings to help them understand the importance of the meetings and what will be

happening at these meetings. Stories need to be developed with great human interest for individuals in a specific geographic region. By having news values present in the press releases and other information, media practitioners might be more willing to do more coverage on the information related to transportation projects.

As GDOT jurisdictions pertains to State, Counties and Cities (partial and to some extent, but not maintenance), and its involvement & supervision on planning and design for local, county and city roads & bridges is critical to the infrastructure of the State, the next section is addressing the value of public involvement activities as early as possible in the project planning and design phases.

7.3 Recommendations for Public Involvement Early in the Planning Process

Involvement of the public early in the planning process is important. Early involvement will increase public trust as people will feel they have more input in the process. It will also allow for easier incorporation of feedback from the public, which in turn also increases public trust as the public will feel that they can enact change (this represents a major difference compared to GDOT Public Involvement Plan document). Not involving the public or media early on in the process was a recurring theme from both the survey of the media practitioners (Chapter 5) and survey of the public (Chapter 3). In both surveys, respondents noted that they felt that they were not involved or provided information early enough in the project to affect change. As noted in Chapter 5, in order to increase the chances of the media covering a story (agenda building), GDOT may want to provide information about projects earlier and localize those projects for that particular media outlet. The media also indicated they would like more information about funding and finances. The increased coverage of localized GDOT projects that includes information

about funding and finances by the media should serve to increase awareness and transparency, which should result in increased trust. As GDOT's activities and responsibilities are critical to the infrastructure of the State, the activities outlined in this section are recommended for involving the public in the early project planning and design stages.

Keeping people, especially those directly affected, informed on the current transportation projects, problems, and concerns and engaging them early in the planning process before the project design is complete is essential for successful public involvement. Based on the results of the survey of state residents we did, many residents felt that by the time the Public Meeting/Open House was conducted, the project was already designed and, therefore, their input was no longer needed. Therefore, early identification of key project stakeholders as well as those that are specific to the project (nearby homeowners associations as an example) is the first step to and determines the range of public involvement in the respective project. As already suggested in the Public Involvement Plan, early in the project development process, the PM and/or Project Team members are encouraged to identify those key stakeholders by researching the project area using a combination of:

- Google maps/GIS images
- Census data, local chamber of commerce reports, etc.
- "Ride-Throughs"
- Informal dialogues with area residents, business owners, city officials and others

To identify key stakeholders and involve them early in the planning process, GDOT can follow the model set forth for public involvement in the Statewide Transportation Plan

(SWTP). In the project planning development phase, the Office of Planning leads the public involvement effort for the update of the SWTP targeted to reach all sectors of the public, including the traditionally underserved, and to offer opportunities to participate in shaping the state's future transportation. An effective use of resources regarding public involvement plan for the SWTP ensures stakeholder involvement by using a number of approaches:

- GDOT should continue to meet with interested stakeholders (citizens, other public agencies, businesses, environmental justice groups) to inform the parties of the importance of developing the SWTP and to seek their assistance in setting goals for it

- Outreach efforts through a Stakeholder Advisory Committee established for the SWTP update will involve Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), local jurisdictions, modal representatives, transit providers, bicycle/pedestrian representatives, and state agencies

- As needed, additional meetings may be held in the midpoint of the SWTP development

- Meetings may be held with the interested parties to inform the group of the SWTP findings and recommendations

- In order to ensure the widest possible public participation, project activities, findings and conclusions and public meeting schedules should be disseminated through the general media across the state (including TV, radio, newspapers, social media and on the GDOT website)

- Information materials (brochures, fact sheets, slides, summary reports, display

  boards, etc.) should be developed to provide summary information on the SWTP

  update process in layman's terms for the general public, but at a minimal cost to

  the Department

- The Georgia DOT website should maintain a specific area to post information on

  the SWTP, which should be found at http://www.dot.ga.gov/IS/SSTP. Visitors to

  this page should be able to submit comments and questions about the SWTP

  online via this site. In addition, the site should continue to offer visitors

  publications, the ability to be added to a mailing list and to provide comments and

  feedback online. The website is an efficient and cost-effective tool in helping to

  document outreach efforts

- Counting the number of visitors to the website and comments provided via the

  site should be fully documented as part of the outreach program; documents with

  conclusions and results should be also posted in this area of the website to

  enhance further communication with the public

Various techniques can be employed to ensure that language, culture, access and

economic barriers are addressed when SWTP information is shared and public input is

needed, as also suggested by GDOT's Public Involvement Plan. Some of these

techniques may include:

- Partner with minority business associations, Chambers of Commerce,

  neighborhood groups, homeowner associations, etc.

- Schedule focus group meetings inviting members of the African-American, Asian, Hispanic, disabled and other traditionally underserved communities to give ideas/comments and gain feedback on the plan

- Create a targeted focus on minority media outlets and inclusion of minority media in the paid advertising schedule

- Use volunteer translators to assist at project meetings and to translate project documents

- Adjust meeting dates, times and locations to fit the work schedules and/or cultural behaviors of the affected community. Being mindful of religious and other holidays and dress codes that would impact how successfully the project information will be received is an example of the cultural behavior

- Organize a combination of low and high-tech ways to communicate (based on project complexities) may be involved to attract public participation and comments/feedback

7.4 Future Research

To help GDOT save money and increase public participation in the future projects, the authors would like to recommend the following areas for further investigation:

- Examine costs and man hour estimates in Tables 34 – 36 more closely to identify areas for savings

- Examine the current organizational structure and responsibilities as it relates to the offices involved in public outreach and public involvement for inefficiencies and duplication of effort as well as to potentially identify areas for reorganization to achieve cost savings

- Investigate new technologies and embrace digital marketing to strengthen participation and improve engagement, like using social media outlets to provide more visual and enhanced information about specific projects

- Investigate improvements that may be implemented to GDOT webpage and tracking mechanisms for usage of project information published in the Public/Media Center area of the website

- Guide implementation of the best practices and strategies other DOTs have found successful for improving content of meetings and follow-up on public involvement activities dedicated for each phase of the project, as laid out in the general Public Involvement Plan

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APPENDIX A

State of Practices and Strategies to conduct Open Houses and Public Meetings - Questionnaire

1. What is most efficient technique for the public to find information about your state DOT?
   a. Online
   b. Hotlines
   c. In person
   d. Other (please specify) _____.
2. What public audiences are most involved and active with your DOT?
   a. Ethnic Groups
   b. Minority Groups
   c. Low Income Groups
   d. People with Disabilities
   e. Older Audiences
   f. Younger Audiences
   g. Other (please specify) _____.
3. What types of "face to face" Public Involvement techniques are effective for your DOT?
   a. Public Meetings/Hearings
   b. Speaker Bureaus
   c. Drop in Centers
   d. Other (please specify) _____.
4. What venues have been used effectively for holding public meetings and hearings?
   a. Libraries
   b. Government Agency Space
   c. Malls
   d. Schools
   e. Other (please specify) _____.
5. What is the most effective form of social media or online resource that is used to interact with the public and promote DOT?
   a. Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Instagram
   d. Flickr
   e. Blog (Tumblr, WordPress, etc.)
   f. LinkedIn
   g. Email Subscriptions
   h. Other (please specify) _____.
6. What type of content does your DOT provide that is most used and requested by the public?
   a. Traffic Updates
   b. Online Documents

      c. Calendars
      d. Contact Information
      e. Other (please specify) _____.

7. What time of day is the most convenient and beneficial for public participation/outreach/involvement?
      a. Weekends
      b. Weeknights
      c. Lunch time
      d. Mornings
      e. Other (please specify) _____.

8. What type of advertisements are effective for your DOT?
      a. Website
      b. Newspaper
      c. Emails
      d. Newsletters
      e. Social Media
      f. Other (please specify) _____.

9. What is an effective method for obtaining public feedback?
      a. Online
      b. Hotlines
      c. Face to Face
      d. Other (please specify) _____.

10. What form of feedback is used most for public input?
      a. Surveys
      b. Focus Groups
      c. Comment Boxes
      d. Other (please specify) _____.

11. When does the agency address the public's feedback?
      a. Within the day
      b. Within the week
      c. Within the month
      d. Within the year
      e. Never
      f. Other (please specify) _____.

12. What "other" activities the agency has used to involve the public?
      a. Transportation fairs
      b. Games/contests
      c. Other (please specify) _____.

13. Do you provide any incentives to encourage participation in public meetings and open houses or for receiving feedback from the public? If so, please specify what type of incentives are used and for what purpose.
      _____.

APPENDIX B

Survey to gauge Individuals' Trust and Public Knowledge about GDOT

Survey Questions:

Public Trust/Cynicism

Your personal feelings: Please assess your feelings toward each statement regarding the US Department of Transportation. You will indicate 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement and you will indicate 5 if you strongly agree with the statement. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

   A. At times, the US Department of Transportation can be so complex that people like me don't understand what is going on.
      1. Strongly Disagree
      2. Disagree
      3. Neither Disagree or Agree
      4. Agree
      5. Strongly Agree

   B. The US Department of Transportation is trustworthy.
      1. Strongly Disagree
      2. Disagree
      3. Neither Disagree or Agree
      4. Agree
      5. Strongly Agree

   C. People like me don't have a say in what the US Department of Transportation does.
      1. Strongly Disagree
      2. Disagree
      3. Neither Disagree or Agree
      4. Agree
      5. Strongly Agree

   D. I think that I am better informed about the US Department of Transportation than others.
      1. Strongly Disagree
      2. Disagree
      3. Neither Disagree or Agree
      4. Agree
      5. Strongly Agree

   E. I think that the US Department of Transportation does not listen to people like me.
      1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

F. The US Department of Transportation is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

G. The US Department of Transportation has lost touch with people.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

H. When something is run by the US Department of Transportation, it is usually inefficient and wasteful.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

I. The US Department of Transportation is really run for the benefit of all the people.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

J. The US Department of Transportation is too powerful.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Your personal feelings: Please assess your feelings toward each statement regarding the Georgia Department of Transportation. You will indicate 1 if you strongly disagree

with the statement and you will indicate 5 if you strongly agree with the statement. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

A. At times, the Georgia Department of Transportation can be so complex that people like me don't understand what is going on.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

B. The Georgia Department of Transportation is trustworthy.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

C. People like me don't have a say in what the Georgia Department of Transportation does.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

D. I think that I am better informed about the Georgia Department of Transportation than others.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

E. I think that the Georgia Department of Transportation does not listen to people like me.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

F. The Georgia Department of Transportation is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree

3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

G. The Georgia Department of Transportation has lost touch with people.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

H. When something is run by the Georgia Department of Transportation, it is usually inefficient and wasteful.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

I. The Georgia Department of Transportation is really run for the benefit of all the people.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

J. The Georgia Department of Transportation is too powerful.
1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree or Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Public Knowledge

The Georgia Department of Transportation wants to know if it has educated people in the state well enough into what the government agency does. Please answer the questions below to determine if we have done a good enough job in telling you what we do. CORRECT ANSWER IN BOLD BUT DO NOT BOLD IN THE ACTUAL SURVEY

A. Although we do not have a lot of snow, we do have snowstorms every once in a while. What agency oversees snow removal on city roads?
1. **City Department of Transportation**
2. County Department of Transportation
3. Georgia Department of Transportation

    4. US Department of Transportation

B. Although we do not have a lot of snow, we do have snowstorms every once in a while. What agency oversees snow removal on county roads?
1. City Department of Transportation
2. **County Department of Transportation**
3. Georgia Department of Transportation
4. US Department of Transportation

C. Although we do not have a lot of snow, we do have snowstorms every once in a while. What agency oversees snow removal on state roads?
1. City Department of Transportation
2. County Department of Transportation
3. **Georgia Department of Transportation**
4. US Department of Transportation

D. Although we do not have a lot of snow, we do have snowstorms every once in a while. What agency oversees snow removal on the interstates?
1. City Department of Transportation
2. County Department of Transportation
3. Georgia Department of Transportation
4. **US Department of Transportation**

E. The Georgia Department of Transportation oversees ports and waterways across the state, including two ports. Can you name one of the two ports the agency oversees? (open ended response)
1. **Savannah**
2. **Brunswick**

F. The Georgia Department of Transportation oversees other modes of transportation besides roads, including planning and financial support for other modes of transportation such as rail, transit, airports and air safety planning.
1. **True**
2. False

G. The Toll road in Georgia is:
1. **I-85**
2. I-95
3. I-16
4. I-20
5. I-75

H. The Georgia Department of Transportation has a cell number for motorists to call to get up to the minute road conditions. Do you know what the number for this service is?
  1. 211
  2. 511
  3. 711
  4. 911

I. The Georgia Department of Transportation often holds public meetings with residents to get feedback on potential projects. Do you know at what part of the project the Georgia Department of Transportation elicit comment from the public?
  1. Beginning of the project
  2. During the design phase
  3. During the construction phase
  4. At the end of the project

Involvement in Open Houses

The Georgia Department of Transportation often holds special meetings called Open Houses across the state to get feedback from people in our state. We know you are busy. But we would like to know if you have ever attended our meetings, and if not, what might make you interested in our meetings.

A. Do you read about stories about Georgia Department of Transportation potential projects in the news media?
  1. Yes
      i. If Yes, please indicate which news media_____
  2. No

B. Have you ever attended an Open House held by the Georgia Department of Transportation?
  1. Yes
      i. If Yes, please indicate when and where_____
  2. No

C. If you have not attended an Open House before, please indicate why you didn't attend the meeting (Please indicate all reasons):
  1. I do not have time
  2. I did not know about the meeting
  3. I do not care about the projects
  4. My comments won't make a difference to GDOT

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5. Other – (open ended response)

D. What could the Georgia Department of Transportation do to make you want to attend its Open Houses on important projects in your area?
1. Offer incentives to attend the meeting
2. Do a better job of explaining the projects to me
3. Other – (open ended responses)

E. Instead of going to meetings, would you be more willing to go online and post comments on Georgia Department of Transportation's website about potential projects?
1. Yes
2. No

F. Would you be willing to use social media to get information on projects and comment about potential projects about the Georgia Department of Transportation?
1. Yes
2. No

G. Are there any other things that the Georgia Department of Transportation can do to get you interested in attending Open Houses? (open ended response)

H. Are there any other things that the Georgia Department of Transportation can do to get you interested in giving feedback to potential projects that the department is overseeing? (open ended responses)

Basic Demographics

Demographic information: Here are some questions for classification purposes. Please indicate the answer that best describes you. Some of the questions ask for a written response. Feel free to answer the question as thoroughly as possible.

A. What is the highest grade of school you have completed?
1. Less than high school
2. High school graduate
3. Some college
4. College graduate
5. Graduate work beyond college

B. Please indicate your household income per year.
1. Less than $30,000
2. $30,001 to $75,000

3. $75,001 to $100,000
4. $100,001 to $200,000
5. More than $200,000

C. Are you:
1. Male
2. Female

D. What race do you consider yourself?
1. Caucasian
2. African-American
3. Asian
4. American Indian
5. Hispanic or Latino
6. Other – please specify:_____

E. What political party do you affiliate yourself with?
1. Republican
2. Democrat
3. Independent
4. Green
5. Liberal
6. Other

F. How would you describe your strength with your affiliation with a political party?
1. Strong conservative
2. Mildly conservative
3. Middle of the road
4. Mildly liberal
5. Strong liberal

G. In what year were you born? _____

H. Where do you get most of your news from?
1. Newspapers
2. Television
3. Magazines
4. Radio
5. Internet
6. Other – please
   specify:_____

I. How many days in the past week did you turn to that medium in the previous question for information?
0. 0 days
1. 1 day
2. 2 days

3. 3 days
4. 4 days
5. 5 days
6. 6 days
7. 7 days

J. What newspaper, television station, magazine, radio station, Internet Web site, or magazine do you get most of your information from?
_____

K. How many days in the past week did you turn to that medium for information?
0. 0 days
1. 1 day
2. 2 days
3. 3 days
4. 4 days
5. 5 days
6. 6 days
7. 7 days

L. How many hours per day do you use the Internet?
1. 0 hours
2. Less than 1 hour a day
3. 1 to 3 hours per day
4. More than 3 hours but less than 7 hours per day
5. 7 hours or more per day

M. What do you use the Internet for mostly?
1. Studying/Schoolwork
2. Staying in touch with friends
3. Surfing the Web for information
4. Playing games
5. Keeping updated on national and international events
6. Other (be specific):_____

Interviews with News Media Practitioners (transcripts)

Interview No. 1, setting: over the phone

(Start of interview)

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Locally, it is crime.

Interviewer: What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Traffic problems.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Economy.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Because it happens every single night in Savannah.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Because we have accidents every day.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Probably because people are not getting enough jobs.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: I imagine weekly here.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: Some of these questions I don't have the authority to answer, because I'm not in the news department.

(Did not answer last four questions)

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you a) female or b) male?

Interviewee: a) female

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian.

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1978.

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Marketing Producer.

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: Since 2002, full time.

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: I don't really get with that part; I am the marketing coordinator so I don't do really anything with the news.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

First:

Second:

Third:

Interview No. 2: over the phone

<u>(Start of interview)</u>

<u>Issue Importance</u>

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Transportation.

Interviewer: What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Criminal Justice.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Social services, child protection services.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: It touches almost everybody every day. It slows people down from getting to work; it slows down products from getting delivered, and it greatly, greatly extends the work day for people.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: People are afraid. They think that if they walk out at night and they see what consider a shady character, that they're in danger. You have to ensure that people feel safe.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Children are so vulnerable. They need someone to speak for them and protect them from abuse and neglect.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: Bi-weekly because I don't cover them.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: If it peaks my interest, or falls into one of the issues that we focus on. It could be weather; it could be expected growth closures, construction.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: Contact information for people we can call who are experts or within the agency, not just call the public information office.

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: No, never.

(Did not answer last two questions, do not cover GDOT open house/public meetings)

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you a) female or b) male?

Interviewee: a) female.

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian.

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1955.

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████████████████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Reporter.

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 37/38 years.

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: Criminal justice issues, the death penalty.

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: No, but we're in transition right now. I don't work with them. We don't have a transportation reporter right now.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee:

First: Impact

Second: Timeliness

Third: Proximity

Interview No. 3: over the phone

<u>(Start of interview)</u>

<u>Issue Importance</u>

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Stories that will be relevant to everyone in the state of Georgia, they want to get stories out of the GDOT that will do this. (Broad/general basis that affects the people of Georgia as the whole). I) The information on repaving a ramp, or road work in a specific area (like Statesboro) is not too important to what they are trying to get to their viewers since it is supposed to be state-wide. Weather (hurricanes/ice/snow) on the other hand is very important, anything that majorly affects the GA location as a whole.

Interviewer*:* What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Finance/funding. Stories on how the state of Georgia is receiving and spending money.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: People tune into radio to find on what's going on while they are driving around, so focus #1 is so because that's what people are looking for.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Personal bias and through experience, "people find money important, but they don't know a lot about it. How the public's money is spent is one of the primary functions of the media - it connects the public to their government, since the government takes the public's money."

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: N/A

<u>Georgia Department of Transportation</u>

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: Daily - Almost daily, he (the reporter who handles the GDOT beat) received at least 2 or 3 emails from them today (6/7/16).

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: Whether or not the information falls under categories one or two. He (the reporter who handles the GDOT beat) did not run any today, because some stories are about specific construction or work on a specific bridge, which he (the reporter who handles the GDOT beat) believes are tailored as "local" stories, not so much GA-wide, regional stories. I) He does like to see these stories, and he does read them, but he didn't use these stories because they were about small stories that would not be of importance to anyone unless they live within 10 miles of the event/construction.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: If the information can be valuable to the people of the GA region, and not just a small town, and if the information is focused on the funds/finances of the state of GA. i) He is always looking for something to be run that could be valuable/useful and relevant for his audience ii) EX. Future projects that money is going towards, such as GA interstates. These stories are used whenever given. iii) ***Give him something relevant to a large group of people in GA***

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Never- rarely, they (the news organization) do not have the personnel to do so.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: The last coverage was a public meeting on the Transportation Bill about a year ago. He (the reporter who handles the GDOT beat) usually calls Natalie Dale for information on an open house/public meeting, but it all depends on the meeting. A meeting about the GDOT giving information to the public can easily be gained by a phone call to GDOT.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Hire them (the news organization) a staff. They (the reporters) do the best they (the reporters) can since the department is being spread thin, but this is "the nature of the beast."

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you a) male or b) female?

Interviewee: a) male.

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian.

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1959.

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████████████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: News producer (news director)

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 34 years.

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: The state of Georgia.

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: They (the news reporters) all do, they may have the same answers but another contact would be Doug Nodine (afternoon anchor): dougnodine@iheartmedia.com or dougnodine@georgianewsnetwork.com

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee:

1st: Impact

2nd: Proximity

3rd: Timeliness

Interview No. 4: over the phone

(Start of interview)

Issue Importance

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: For our audience, I think the main issue right now may not be a traffic issue. You're asking mainly about traffic issues right? (Interviewer: Well it can be anything, it

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doesn't have to be traffic related.) OH okay! Um, in this region I would think probably the main issue is the use of Lake Lanier and water issues. Yeah, I think that's what most of our audience in Hall County and surrounding areas are concerned about.

Interviewer*:* What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I would think economic development, quality job growth.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I think traffic is a large issue for this area. Transportation and how to get around, even in a smaller town like Gainesville. It is difficult at best to navigate the city so locally and on a state wide level I think people are concerned about transportation.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Well, Lake Lanier is a big economic factor for this area for one thing. It brings a lot of recreation and tourism. So when the lake is not full, there is an issue with the economy and the area. And then there's the drinking water issue as well, so I think that's probably the biggest deal for us.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state?

Interviewee: For this county to continue to grow, and to continue to grow in a quality way, there has to be an economic development plan. You can't just have haphazard economic growth, nor can you stagnate. You can't have a mentality of nobody else is allowed here. We have to maintain our growth in a way that is not damaging.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third most important issue faced by the state?

Interviewee: Well it really kind of ties to the other two items that I mentioned. In order for the area to grow effectively, you have to be able to get around the area. We see that problem a lot in Gainesville. There's not really a way to get around the city. It's not like Atlanta but it certainly does bottle neck and moving traffic around the city streets is difficult. And then of course, there are bridges across Lake Lanier that bring tourism traffic and people shopping and that kind of thing to the area. They all kind of interconnect.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: I would say, probably daily.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: If it affects our region. If it's happening in South Georgia, I'm not usually interested in it. But if it affects my North East Georgia region, that's what makes me determine. That's the story I want to use.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: Oh, I'll tell you one thing that the department of labor does that actually makes things so much easier for us because we're a radio station, we like to have audio with our news stories. It gives more credibility to the story. So I think if you had a transportation engineer, I don't think Russell McMurray can do all of it, but you know somebody could certainly do like a one minute or thirty second sound bite that would help us pull some audio. So yeah including audio with the press release would be great.

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: c- quite a bit.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Usually if it's a …… that impacts a large number of people. That's usually it, just depending on how large the project is for the most part.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Well it's not actually a GDOT issue, it's more of a staffing issue with me. I don't have as many people as I need to cover every single meeting and really I don't think GDOT does anything that makes me not want to cover. I think you guys do a fine job there.

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you a) male or b) female?

Interviewee: b) female.

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: a (Caucasian).

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1960.

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: I work for ████████, and that includes ████████, a news website, and then three radio stations under the █████ umbrella.

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: I'm a lot of those things, I'll just say editor.

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: Gosh, you're getting so nosey! 34 years.

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: Well I'm the director of news operations, so I don't necessarily have a beat per say.

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee:

1st: Impact

2nd: Proximity

3rd: Human Interest

<center>**Interview No. 5**: over the phone</center>

<u>(Issue importance)</u>

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Well it would have to be road projects, particularly with the confusion of funding from both federal and state sources.

Interviewer: What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I would say repair and maintenance of current roads, including paving of dirt roads. That may be more of a county responsibility, but if GDOT has any responsibility, that would be very important too.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I can't really think of a third one.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Because simply in the last year the federal government finally passed a comprehensive federal transportation funding bill that's gotten signed into the law, so that's the first time in several years that there's been an infusion of federal money to pay for important road projects like interstate widening and other important projects like that. And then the state of Georgia general assembly passed a big transportation bill last year that has also provided an infusion for, and it's been mostly for road maintenance but maybe with the federal dollar we can help with some new projects also.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the second most important?

Interviewee: I think this is a common issue across the country. It's just the importance of keeping the infrastructure up, particularly bridges and making sure they don't fall down when traffic is on them. And even just in general roads, that they are in good enough shape that they won't ruin vehicles or keeping up with the wear and tear of tractor trailers and other large vehicles, the wear and tear they have on the roads.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the third most important?

Interviewee: N/A

Georgia Department of Transportation

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: I would say the average is probably bi-weekly.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: Most important is whether it pertains to our coverage area and most of the press releases we get don't pertain to our coverage area. Some of them do, and we do include those in our coverage. Also timing, often times GDOT sends press releases either right when the project has started or right before the project has started and sometimes it's a short duration. We can't get it in print because of our print cycle because we're not daily, so sometimes that kind of hamstrings us when they give us such short notice. Or they'll give us very short notice.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: I think that timing is an issue. Give us a little more lead time. I am editor of chief publications, one is twice a week and the other is weekly. We can put information on line and we do as much as we can, but it's still helpful because much of our audience reads the print paper so they don't get the benefit of some of these late noticing,

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Yes. If GDOT has a meeting in Bulloch County, we will cover it. So I think there have been maybe two in the last year. One had to do with 67, and one maybe have had to do with the widening of 80. We're not going to cover something in Macon.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Got to be local.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: If it's not in the area, it just doesn't have any interest to our readers. Obviously we're a local newspaper, we're not a state newspaper so if it doesn't affect our readers in the Bulloch County area, like I said it could be Screven, it could be Claxton, but that's really the only deciding factor.

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Male

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1959

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████████████████████████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Operations manager editor

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 35 years

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: No, I'm the publisher so I oversee people who have beats.

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: No, no, our reporters do. They (the reporters) work with them (GDOT) a lot more closely than I do.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: 1st: proximity
             2nd: impact
             3rd: prominence

Interview No. 6: over the phone

(Issue importance)

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I'd say crime.

Interviewer: What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: The economy.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Let's see, I'd say education.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Because it affects people's safety of where they live.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the second most important?

Interviewee: Because it's about jobs and a paycheck and security.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the third most important?

Interviewee: Because that's the key to success for kids who are in the system. To keep them out of crime, and into the economy, into the first two.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: Daily.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: How it will affect our viewers and if it will affect our viewers.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: I guess the consequences of their (GDOT's) work. If it affects our viewers, we're more interested.

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Quite a bit.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: If it's a large scale project that will affect a good majority of our viewers, we want to be there.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Give us plenty of notice, provide us plenty of graphics and pictures to visualize the story.

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Male

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1958

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████████, GA

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Anchor

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: Since 1981

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: No beat, I'm 5 6(couldn't hear) 11 o'clock news anchor.

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: No, I would say we all do.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: 1st: Impact
               2nd: Proximity
               3rd: Conflict

(Start of interview)

<u>Issue Importance</u>

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Most important issue facing the state? Are you talking about for transportation? (Interviewer: Well just Georgia in general.) Well uh, I don't really know, if there's one single issue I would point to and say it's the most important issue for the states, I guess always the economy and jobs.

Interviewer: What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I would say probably health care, particularly Medicaid, but healthcare in general.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Probably improving infrastructure in general. No, actually I want to take that back. It's actually education. From a secondary level up to university level.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Well, that's basically how uh, everything revolves around that. People live their lives based on how they're doing in a job. The economy obviously has so many facets to it. The underlying facets is jobs. You gotta have a decent place to get a job, or let the economy work together as a whole. That's a very small explanation of that. The economy involves dozens of factors, job creation, and good jobs is key.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state?

Interviewee: Again, it affects basically everybody. And we still do not have a real system involved that helps everybody. Certainly Obama Care has addressed some of that, but the cost of healthcare is still skyrocketing. It's getting to the point where it almost doesn't matter if you have insurance, the insurance is going to be so overpriced because the cost of actually delivering health care is crazy. And again, it affects so many people. Georgia chose not to accept the Medicaid funding from the federal government, a lot of states did, and Georgia has tens of thousands of people who do not have real access to health care. So that is something that is a continuing issue.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third most important issue faced by the state?

Interviewee: Georgia continues to be in the bottom of performing test results and performing students, SAT scores, and measuring success. Frankly, that's something that

has been an issue for a very long time in Georgia. We have tried many different things, the Federal Government puts several different programs. It's a very difficult issue because you're dealing with so many different people, from so many different walks of life from economic levels to cultural levels. We have a lot more immigrants in Georgia than we had 15/20 years ago. All those factors make education very difficult. You've gotta have an educated work force to attract the companies here to create the kinds of job that aren't just working at McDonalds. Again, nothing wrong with that job if you're a college student, but difficult for most people.

<u>Georgia Department of Transportation</u>

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: It's definitely not weekly. I mean it's kind of sporadic. If there's something going on, we might get two or three announcements in a week, uh, if there's road closures around here or if they're working on a project, if there's something going on I-16 in the area. In general, I think we get two or three a month that probably have direct pertinence to this area.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: Well, I think it'd be an impact on the local readers. If we think there's a project going on that would affect our readers. And that could be a little broad. Like I would say if there's major construction going on in Atlanta, we might have a few people going to Atlanta that weekend but we're not going to print. Same thing if there's something going on in Brunswick or Bainbridge. But say if there's something going on I-16 towards Savannah or perhaps going towards Macon, we print that. Certainly anything that's going on in Bulloch county and probably Screven county and Evans and Candler. Depending, I think, on the complexity of the project is if we actually did a story on it or we just printed some basic information on what's going on.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: I would think that for any media publication, it really would depend on location. That's when they're going to do a story or they're not, and how many people it impacts.

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Yes. (Interviewer: How often is it?) If GDOT has a meeting in Bulloch County, we will cover it. So I think maybe two in the last year. One had to do with 67, it may have been a little longer, and to do with 80, the widening of 80. (Interviewer: So it's more so like once in a while, it's not frequent?) Only if it's in this area. Again, we're not going to cover something in Macon.

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Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Got to be local.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: If it's not in the area, it just doesn't have any interest to our readers, and obviously we're a local newspaper, not a state newspaper, so if it doesn't affect our readers in the Bulloch county area, like I said it could be Screven, Claxton, Metter, that's really the only deciding factor.

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you a) male or b) female?

Interviewee: a) male

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: White

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1959

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Operations Manager Editor

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 35 years

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: No, I'm the publisher and the editor so I over see people who have beats.

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: No, our reporters do. They work with them (GDOT) a lot more closely than say I would.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3 rd.

Interviewee: Proximity, Impact, Prominence

Interview No. 8: over the phone

<u>(Start of interview)</u>

<u>Issue Importance:</u>

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I would say education is the most important issue but transportation would be very, very close second.

Interviewer: So why do you feel that education is first?

Interviewee: Because the future workforce needs are gonna require a well-educated workforce.

Interviewer: And why do you feel that the second issue faced by the state is that important?

Interviewee: Well in terms of economic development Floyd County has had its lunch beaten by Bartow County and Gordon County, because they're on interstate 75, Rome has been attempting to get a US form of direct connection to 75 for over 30 years, and for the most part that's been held up by one property owner. But there are also a couple of other projects that are currently underway that will help – all roads need their own – it isn't necessarily the case in Rome, Georgia.

Interviewer: And do you have a third most important issue?

Interviewee: Well you know, I would simply say that the broad category of economic development. For the same reasons as above.

<u>Georgia Department of Transportation:</u>

Interviewer: So how often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: Virtually daily. Through emails.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: Well the first thing is whatever they (GDOT employees) put in the subject line. Quite frankly, we get a lot of material that is not necessarily germane to our audience, and when I see something in a headline that - or subject line of an email, if it's not something that is germane to my audience, I don't even open it.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more

willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: Most of the time the information that they send, if it is germane, I'm more willing to do a story on it. There's not a whole lot that they send that is germane to our audience and we don't ultimately do a story.

Interviewer: Do you ever cover open houses or public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Yes, once in a while.

Interviewer: And what are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on an open house or public meeting?

Interviewee: Again, if it is germane to our specific audience.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT can do to make you more willing to cover more open houses or public meetings?

Interviewee: Well, I would say, probably more often than none it would be something that would be a factor that would go against the grain of why they (GDOT) hold a public hearing. I'm more inclined to do something during the workday, than I would be at night. But of course I know they typically have a lot of their public hearings in the evening when the people mainly come, so that's what I suppose. If it's a night public hearing, it has to be really important for me to go to it (direct quote).

Basic Demographics/Employment:

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Male

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?
Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1953

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Associate editor

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 38 years

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: Primarily business

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: Impact, Timeliness, and Currency

Interview No. 9: over the phone

(Start of interview)

Issue Importance:

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Well they need information on things that are important to them, things that might affect their pocket for one thing, you know how much they're spending. Finances are very important. The question of what the issues are for our audience, what people are interested in, is really currently in debate. I would say their pocket book for one, what's going on around them, in their neighborhoods, things that may be affecting them in an emotional nature (ex: car wreck).

Georgia Department of Transportation:

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: Once a week, maybe twice a week.

Interviewer: Think about the last time you've received information from GODT, what are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information they sent?

Interviewee: I guess number one if it's within our region or circulation area within our

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coverage. Or if the project affects us directly and the readers that we serve. That would be the number one reason of figuring out coverage for that story.

Interviewer: And what are some things that GDOT can do to make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: You know, I never really thought about it. Usually all they really need to do is explain – like once a month they send out (some type of information to news organizations), or every time they have a bidding of projects, they send out a list of them. I really can't think of anything honestly, right off the top of my head. So I guess they're doing an okay job there!

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses or public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Once in a while, more on as needed basis, they generally only seem to happen about once a year.

Interviewer: What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses or public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: If it's a project of – if they're having an open house or project that they already know that a lot of people are expecting or interested in, I usually go around every open house because it's a project that affects a lot of people. They don't have a lot of open houses for projects that don't affect a lot of people; so, if they hold an open house, it's because it affects a lot of people.

Interviewer: And what are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses or public meetings that they have?

Interviewee: (GDOT is) pretty good about getting information – one thing I will say is the trouble they need to get the information and just a little, maybe the press releases and the notifications that they're having – it would be better if they would do a little sooner than what they do. In other words, they post signs and they put out legal notices on public hearings all before they ever send information to us, which is fine but I mean I can find things like that online but if they could time the notification to the media that they're having these public hearings with the legal notice, that would be helpful.

Basic Demographics/Employment:

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Male

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1963

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ████████████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Reporter

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: Reported 31 years

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: Transportation and local government

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: Primarily the one that works with GDOT, others help when needed.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: Impact, Unusualness and Proximity.

Interview No. 10: over the phone

(Start of interview)

Issue Importance:

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I mean, for us it's really, you know, upcoming projects, letting people know how projects are going to affect them, letting people know about projects that are coming. People get really mad about not getting red lights when they want them. People whine about red lights forever. They don't understand work studies. They blame the county a lot, that's the big issue, people don't understand the differences between GDOT projects and county projects and city projects, and they just want to blame whatever random government agency they feel like blaming.

Interviewer: So you feel like the first problem is things going on around the state - like highway and interstate kind of projects?

Interviewee: We don't give a crap about anything going on around the state, all we care about is us. Local transportation is what we do.

Interviewer: Do you have a second issue that you really focus on with your audience?

Interviewee: Regarding GDOT? What else is there?

Interviewer: Not so much, GDOT, basically what you guys want to provide your audience.

Interviewee: I'm sorry but that question doesn't make any sense. I mean it's more of a survey than an interview? Who designed this? This just sounds crazy -- I'm sorry, I'm just very negative today.

Interviewer: So, you said your first issue is basically transportation and such.

Interviewee: Well, I mean you know, when we're talking about GDOT, we provide lots of local information about lots of things; traffic and road projects and detours -- those are pretty vital, those are things that really affect everybody, even people that don't really care about the school board or what their county is doing, they care about the traffic they're sitting in or the red light they may need - stuff like that.

Interviewer: So do you have any other main things that you give your audience?

Interviewee: We give them local news, human interest stories - news you can use.

Interviewer: So do you have a ranking for those, or is it basically all equally important to you guys?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean, I'm sorry -- I'll be honest, I just don't even understand the point of this question or how to answer it. We do a lot of crime (coverage), I would say for most people they like crime and road stuff, and taxes. Those are probably the top three.

Interviewer: Why do you feel those are the main issues?

Interviewee: Because those are the main things people are concerned about. And school... education and stuff.

Georgia Department of Transportation:

Interviewer: Alright, so how often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: I get press release a couple (of) times a week, usually they're not relevant to me, I just get district press releases. So I would say multiple times a week, I'll get something in my inbox, I may not open it because it's not about something that's happening here.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: If it's important information that's actually relevant to us and I'll usually do a story. If it involves a local project in our local area that people would be interested about, I'll do something about it. Usually if it's in the subject line, the subject lines are usually quite descriptive, so it'll say 'blank something on I-16' OK, I'm not going to open that because I don't care. So I appreciate that the subject lines say important information from GDOT or something like that.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: It's gotta be local, we'll get a lot of stuff that will be like, you know, contract issues for a project, and when I get one of those I have to go click on it and look through it and I have to go and see what the project is, but it's pretty simple, so I really like how they (GDOT) have their little project-see window open and you can click on it and that's really cool.

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Pretty much every stinkin' one of 'em that we have in our county. The only one I didn't go to was one that pretty much no one told us about, but yeah, I pretty much cover all of them.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: I mean, it's an important local news item, people want to know. If it's a job people care about, it's a good way to get people information and it's always nice to talk to the regular folks that show up and see what they think about the project and I mean those are good. That's what we do, what we're about. I'll admit, they aren't well attended. Most people are not attracted to an open house; so since I go, I can be one of those people to give the information they don't care enough to get themselves.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Better notice would help. Sending out - having readily -- OK, you know they have all of those nice maps up there and sometimes they'll have little video simulations. Make those readily available. Send me those in an email before the meeting. If I had those before the meeting, it could tell people more about what they're going to see at the open house. I think more people would be interested in going. I think better access to project documents, maps, etc. would be good -- and better notice. Sometimes we don't get press releases about them, we just happen to find them in a legal ad, so they need to publicize those better.

Basic Demographics/Employment:

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Female

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1976

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ████████████████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Staff writer

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 16 years

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: Primarily GDOT reporter, county Government, state news, small town paper.

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: Someone might on a rare occasion, but 95% it is me.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: Impact, Timeliness & Human Interest

Interview No. 11: over the phone

<u>(Start of interview)</u>

<u>Issue Importance</u>:

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Probably the length of construction projects, especially the 204 construction projects in Georgetown.

Interviewer: And do you have a second most important issue?

Interviewee: Lights, I think a practical issue is traffic lights and lights in general along some of the interstates.

Interviewer: OK, and do you have a third most important issue?

Interviewee: Nope.

Interviewer: So why do you feel the first two are the most important?

Interviewee: They are the ones that people bring up the most.

<u>Georgia Department of Transportation</u>:

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: We get emails and press releases four times a week.

Interviewer: So you would say daily probably?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information they sent?

Interviewee: The impact, I mean how many people are impacted by something.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information they (GDOT) sent?

Interviewee: Mostly if it's new information, something that we haven't covered before usually makes us more inclined to do it. Again, if it's something that's a redraw or something - usually if it's bad news concerning a process, there'd be big coverage.

Interviewer: Do you ever cover open houses or public meetings that GDOT holds?

Interviewee: I personally have not, but I do know we go to some of the ones that are local. Especially if it's a big issue.

Interviewer: OK, so would you say maybe once in a while?

Interviewee: I would say -- definitely, like the ones I can remember most definitely are the west Bay Street blocking.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Again, I mean it's the impact and the level of concern for residence.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT can do to make you more willing to cover the open houses and public meetings?

Interviewee: Sometimes I think it's the timing. Most of the time they (GDOT) have two meetings, like a meeting in the afternoon and a meeting at night, to a lot of us they (GDOT) have the meeting at night. I think one of the things the city of Savannah should start having a couple of meetings so instead of having one in the afternoon than only one at night. So we can go to one without having to worry about getting the other one and get the story out in the daytime rather than having to wait until the 11:00 at night.

Demographics

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Male

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1976

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Anchor/Reporter

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 20 years

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: General converge

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: No, we all do.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd

Interviewee: Impact, Currency & Timeliness

Interview No. 12: over the phone

(Start of interview)

Issue Importance:

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Residential and the sheer number of people that are moving to our area.

Interviewer: And what is the second most important issue that you think the audience may face?

Interviewee: Education.

Interviewer: Education? OK, and what's the third issue?

Interviewee: Probably tax payer money.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that growth is the most important issue?

Interviewee: Well, from the stories we've done here, there are people moving to the state of Georgia, and drove, because of the tax credits for businesses - especially in the entertainment industry. So, we're seeing steady increases in the population in the state. In my particular area, which Augusta is the third largest city in the state, the army, the United States Army cyber center of exports is now placed in Fort Worth GA, which is here in Augusta, and we're going over the next four years, we're going to see an influx of 5,000 families coming from Fairfax Virginia to Augusta GA to run a cyber-committee and in addition to that, Department of Defense contractors are going - we foresee them moving to this area. So between the entertainment industry bringing business to mostly the Atlanta area, and here in Augusta with the cyber center and with the port being in Savannah and large manufacturing companies wanting to use that, Georgia is going to be busting at the seams, we are absolutely starting to suffer from some infrastructure with roads and things growing so fast that you can barely keep up.

Interviewer: Why did you list that Education was the second most important issue?

Interviewee: The state of GA consistently ranks near the bottom nationally as far as how well our children are performing compared to other states and historically the Georgia Public School system in the more rural areas has issue with parental involvement and graduation rates. Recently the governor has taken some pretty proactive steps to help rectify that issue because, with all of these people moving in, they're going to be bringing their kids and they want their kids to have good educations and so the state of GA and the voters and the parents want to do what they can to increase graduation rates, test scores, college acceptances and with the availability of the HOPE Scholarship, it makes it very important to get the students up there academically so they can utilize one of the best scholarship programs in the country. So, being a parent myself and in the business doing a lot of education stories, it's always on voters' and viewers' minds how to retain smart minds in the state of GA that are moving into Augusta and to GA.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that tax payer money is the third most important issue?

Interviewee: Well, right now, with it being such a hot political year with a new president coming in, whether it's a Democrat or a Republican, how people's money is spent by local government as well as the state government as well as federal money -- it's just on the top of their minds, you know, gas prices to how much we're being taxed on our income as well as our goods and with the economy kind of flat right now, where everyone's disposable income goes after they pay their bills is a hot button issue. I think that the voters in GA are very well aware of where their money goes and they're vocal about government waste, but on the other end of that, they are also very vocal about being able to support things like school systems and infrastructure and they want to be very involved because there may be a bit of caution that if they're not involved it may get out of control. They want to be very involved. People want to know where their money goes, if it's fixing their roads or if it's going to go buy chickens. They want to know where their money is going.

Georgia Department of Transportation:

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: Daily. They get back to me very quickly. They're always very good about sending us stuff.

Interviewer: What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information they sent?

Interviewee: If it goes back to our viewers. There's so much GDOT construction in this particular area that it really does go back to our viewers' daily lives.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information they (GDOT) sent?

Interviewee: Time frames, more specific time frames, they could include that kind of information as well as effort to put this construction on the top burner, you know, higher up on the totem pole because it is a necessity that it's finished.

Interviewer: Do you ever cover open houses or public meetings that GDOT holds?

Interviewee: Quite a bit, because the work they're doing in this area is so major.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Visual. If it's just a guy standing in room talking to three people then we're less likely to cover it, but that doesn't mean that we won't do a story on it. If I can go out on the road and talk to the same guy, I'd rather do it there because it's visuals and we're a visual medium. Now, if GDOT was going to have their (its) meetings at the actual location the work is taking place at, they would probably receive more coverage.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT can do to make you more willing to cover the open houses and public meetings?

Interviewee: Actually having them at the locations where they are going to be doing their projects, so it's more visual and that's probably the biggest factor.

Demographics:

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Female

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1972

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: █████████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: News Operations Manager/Content Control

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 20 years

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: Area of Augusta

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

Interviewee: No, we all do.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: Impact, Timeliness and Conflict.

<div align="center">

Interview No. 13: over the phone

</div>

(Start of Interview)

<u>Issue importance</u>

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Jobs, employment.

Interviewer: What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Poverty.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Education.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Without proper jobs, without job creation, Georgia will fall behind in those economic developments and healthy futures for our citizens.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the second most important?

Interviewee: We have two or three cities in the state with poverty levels that exceed a quarter of the population level. This is unacceptable in the 21st century and we just cannot compete on a national or international level if we have this many people under the poverty level in the state of Georgia. (Interviewer: That's interesting, I didn't realize that it was so much). Yes, Savannah alone has a poverty rate of about 26%, Macon is a little over 20%, and Atlanta is about 25%, and that's just unacceptable. In this day and age, with as much money as we have in this state coming in from tourism, from the film and entertainment industry, from the hospitality, that's just an unacceptable number. It just cannot continue.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the third most important?

Interviewee: Our educational systems are far behind the rest of the country in terms of how much we spend per student and the positive outcomes we get from those dollars. If we are unable to compete, again, we will lose in terms of globalization and our position in the national economy.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: Other. (Interviewer: About how often would you say?) I would probably say maybe once every couple of years.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: Based on whether or not if affects our local citizens, whether there's a reason for it to be translated to a local (couldn't understand the last word).

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: Certainly tying it to the economic development in our area. Or making it pertain directly to citizenship or people in our area.

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Yes. (Interviewer: About how often would you say?) I mean probably whenever they have something, let's just say once a month maybe.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Their proximity to the Savannah area, or their impact on the local citizens.

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Female

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1960.

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████████████ .

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Other- Director of Marketing.

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 30 (years).

Interviewer: I know you don't work with the Georgia Department of Transportation personally, how many people in the organization would you say work with GDOT?

Interviewee: Probably just two or three.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: 1st: Proximity
2nd: Impact
3rd: Currency

Interview No. 14: over the phone

(Start of Interview)

Issue importance

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Taxes on the citizens who live here.

Interviewer: What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Jobs.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: Education of the citizens.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: I think that the taxes that the citizens pay have a direct effect of the economic development of the future citizens and their children.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the second most important?

Interviewee: Jobs for the citizens give them the ability to make a good living and supports the other programs that are needed in the community.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the third most important?

Interviewee: Because the state of Georgia needs to improve their (its) education across the board. In Southwest Georgia education is a very vital issue because of the number of people that are a little under educated in this area, which would help out.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: I'd say weekly.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: The interest of the public. The need to know for the community.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: I would say, explain the importance of the need to know for the public.

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Quite a bit. (Interviewer: How often if you could say?) Well we covered one yesterday, so probably once every other month.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Well what the open house is about, the need to know of what the information will be about at the open house.

Interviewer: What are some things GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover the open houses/public meeting?

Interviewee: Stress the importance of it and explain why it's important to the community.

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Male.

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1954.

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ███████████ Albany, GA

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: Anchor, reporter.

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 41 (years).

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: We actually don't have a great deal of beats, I would just say I'm a general news reporter in Albany.

Interviewer: Are you the only one in the organization who works with GDOT?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: 1st: Impact
2nd: Timeliness
3rd: Prominence

Interview No. 15: over the phone

(Start of Interview)

<u>Issue importance</u>

Interviewer: What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I would say education.

Interviewer: What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I would say jobs and employment.

Interviewer: What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Interviewee: I would say transportation.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?

Interviewee: Because I think that the quality of education of k-12 helps nearly every family in the state of Georgia, and then the quality of education post-secondary (not only) helps shape the economics of the entire state but also particular regions specifically.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the second most important?

Interviewee: People that live in this state, they've got to have employment. Even when they're employed, most people are wondering if there's a better job out there. Plenty of people are keeping a constant eye to know whether or not there are more jobs on the way or higher paying jobs on the way to their part of the state.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that this is the third important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the third most important?

Interviewee: I think it's one of the tools that economic developers use in trying to bring more business to the state and in terms of what kind of infrastructure is available for big business, and communities are constantly looking at the quality of their infrastructure to know do they have adequate roads in their particular part of the state. In some cases, increasing that infrastructure helps bring all those jobs and economic opportunities.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Interviewer: How often do you receive information from GDOT?

Interviewee: Daily. Not all of it is pertinent to my particular area, but I receive information daily.

Interviewer: Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent?

Interviewee: All of times it is specific geography. If I get information about a road in Savannah, I may not necessarily be going, but, co-workers likely will. If I get information about a road in Bulloch County or Evans County, then I'm likely to go do a story on it.

Interviewer: What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent?

Interviewee: If they (GDOT) can give you some of the potential impact. If there's a certain road, and they're going to, let's say widen it, or they have to temporarily close

that road, they have some of the data to tell you we're going to add a third lane or fourth lane to that road because they see 37,000 cars a day, and that's some information that might help drive you to getting that (information). Because you know the viewer impact you have.

Interviewer: Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: Very, very frequently. (Interviewer: How often would you say, if you could?) More often than we don't cover. I would say, particularity down in Chatham County if there's one, we're going to have a reporter out of our city beat, and they're (reporters) going to go cover it. For me, depending on where it is and what time the meeting is, I may be able to get there. Or if I've got a conflict I may not be able to make it, but I would say more often than not, we are covering those meetings because that's the chance to get the public's response, even if it's a negative response, even if it's people showing up who don't like this plan, that's the opportunity that we get to talk to folks rather than walk through neighborhoods knocking on doors and you don't know how you're going to be received from that.

Interviewer: What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?

Interviewee: I think sometimes it's scheduling. It can be as arbitrary as the six o'clock meeting is also the same time that something is going on and we've gotta be at that. Sometimes it can be something that arbitrary. But most of the time there's a meeting like that. There is motorist impact to wherever it is they're (GDOT) going. If they are doing some work on a road that is way out in the middle of nowhere, isolated and not too many people go down that road, we might not cover that meeting.

Interviewer: Is there anything GDOT could do to make you guys more willing to cover open houses or public meeting?

Interviewee: I don't think so, I think they're accessible now. Like in our area, Jill is usually the person that's coordinating those and she's usually very accessible. I don't know that there's anything they can do. No, if they (GDOT) could help clear our schedule so that there are no conflicts and nothing else going on at the same time as the meetings, but even Georgia DOT doesn't have that much authority.

Basic Demographics/Employment

Interviewer: Are you male or female?

Interviewee: Male.

Interviewer: What race do you consider yourself?

Interviewee: Caucasian.

Interviewer: In what year were you born?

Interviewee: 1967.

Interviewer: What news organization do you work for?

Interviewee: ██████████████████████

Interviewer: What is your title?

Interviewee: (couldn't hear the first word) Chief

Interviewer: How long have you worked in journalism?

Interviewee: 26 (years).

Interviewer: What is your beat?

Interviewee: All of Southeast Georgia, with the exception of Metro-Savannah.

Interviewer: I know you don't work with the Georgia Department of Transportation personally, how many people in the organization would you say work with GDOT?

Interviewee: Goodness no. I would say among the reporters, there's nobody that's specific and covering DOT, so I would say within a given couple of months any reporter in there might be assigned to go do a particular story.

Interviewer: Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Interviewee: 1st: Impact
2nd: Proximity
3rd: Timeliness

The Interview Template

Issue importance: Please answer the following questions (open-ended).
1) What is the most important issue faced by the state for your audience?
2) What is the second most important issue faced by the state for your audience?
3) What is the third most important issue faced by the state for your audience?

Feelings toward issue importance: Please answer the following questions with regards to the most important issues you listed above (open-ended).

4) Why do you feel that this is the most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the most important?
5) Why do you feel that this is the second most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the second most important?
6) Why do you feel that this is the third most important issue faced by the state? Why did you list this issue as the third most important?

Georgia Department of Transportation: The answers below relate directly to your work with GDOT (mixture of open-ended and close-ended measures).

1. How often do you receive information from GDOT?
    a.   Daily
    b.   Weekly
    c.   Biweekly
    d.   Monthly
    e.   Yearly
    f.   Other

2. Think about when you have received information from GDOT. What are some factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story based on the information that GDOT sent? (open-ended)

3. What are some things that GDOT could include that might make you more willing to do a story on the information it sent? (open-ended)

4. Do you cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has?
    a.   Never
    b.   Once in a while
    c.   Quite a bit
    d.   All the time

5. What are factors that make you decide to do a story or not to do a story on the open houses/public meetings that GDOT has? (open-ended)

6. What are some things that GDOT could do to make you more willing to cover open houses/public meetings that GDOT has? (open-ended)

Basic Demographics/Employment: this is for basic analysis.
1. Are you:
    a.   Male

b.　　Female
2.　What race do you consider yourself?
　　a.　Caucasian
　　b.　African-American
　　c.　Asian
　　d.　American Indian
　　e.　Hispanic or Latino
　　f.　Other – please specify:

3.　In what year were you born?

4.　What news organization do you work for?

5.　What is your title:
　　a.　Publisher
　　b.　Executive Producer
　　c.　Editor
　　d.　News Producer
　　e.　Anchor
　　f.　Reporter
　　g.　Other

6.　How long have you worked in journalism?

7.　What is your beat?

8.　Are you the only one in the news organization who works with the Georgia Department of Transportation?

9.　Please rank the three news values below that you consider most important. Identify them as 1st, 2nd and 3rd.
　　a)　Impact
　　b)　Proximity
　　c)　Timeliness
　　d)　Prominence
　　e)　Unusualness
　　f)　Conflict
　　g)　Currency
　　h)　Affinity
　　i)　Human Interest

APPENDIX D

US DOT – State DOTs Matrix

Appendix D consists of a large table divided in four parts, D.1 - D.4 (attached PDF files, named Appendix D.1 to D.4) representing the investigation of the US DOT strategy with respect to best practices contrasted with other state DOTs to determine their best practices in Public Involvement, as delineated in Chapter 6 of this report.

#	State	Transportation Agencies	Tailored outreach to underserved population									Core Participation Group				Providing Info and Establishing Methods of Communication								
			Activity Centers	Communication in Alternative Languages	Announcements in Ethnic News Outlets	Communication with Community Leaders	Maintain Contact Lists for Community Leaders /Organizations	Contact Community Groups /Religious Organizations	Checklist for Planning Accessible Events	Meeting in Accessible Locations	Materials in Accessible formats	Work with Community Organizations	Work with Civic Advisory Committees	Citizens on Decision and Policy Boards	Use a Collaborative Task Force	Maintain Contact List	Information Materials (Ads, Billboards, Brochures, etc.)	Key Person (Community Leader, Spokesperson, etc.)	Briefings	Use of Video	Use of Phone	Use of Media Strategies	Use of Speaker's Bureaus	Use of Public Involvement Volunteers
1	Alabama	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	Alaska	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
3	Arizona	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
4	Arkansas	Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD)	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
5	California	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	Colorado	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Connecticut	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
8	Delaware	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
9	District of Columbia	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
10	Florida	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
11	Georgia	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
12	Hawaii	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
13	Idaho	Idaho Transportation Department	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	Illinois	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
15	Indiana	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
16	Iowa	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
17	Kansas	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18	Kentucky	Transportation Cabinet	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
19	Louisiana	Department of Transportation & Development	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
20	Maine	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
21	Maryland	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
22	Massachusetts	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
23	Michigan	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
24	Minnesota	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
25	Mississippi	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1

#	State	Department																							
26	Missouri	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
27	Montana	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
28	Nebraska	Nebraska Department of Roads	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
29	Nevada	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
30	New Hampshire	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
31	New Jersey	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
32	New Mexico	Highway and Transportation Department	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
33	New York	New York State Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
34	North Carolina	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
35	North Dakota	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
36	Ohio	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
37	Oklahoma	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
38	Oregon	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
39	Pennsylvania	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
40	Rhode Island	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
41	South Carolina	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
42	South Dakota	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
43	Tennessee	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
44	Texas	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
45	Utah	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
46	Vermont	Agency of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
47	Virginia	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
48	Washington	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
49	West Virginia	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
50	Wisconsin	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
51	Wyoming	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
	TOTAL		59%	100%	31%	100%	100%	100%	33%	100%	100%	98%	94%	98%	37%	98%	100%	96%	96%	100%	100%	96%	31%	86%

	State Transportation Agencies		Determining the Type of Meeting							Involving People in F2F Meetings			
			Public Meetings	Public Hearings	Open Houses	Open Forums	Conferences	Workshops	Retreats	Brainstorming	Charrettes	Visioning	Small Group Techniques
1	Alabama	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
2	Alaska	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
3	Arizona	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
4	Arkansas	Highway and Transportation Department	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
5	California	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	Colorado	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Connecticut	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
8	Delaware	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
9	District of Columbia	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
10	Florida	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
11	Georgia	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
12	Hawaii	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
13	Idaho	Idaho Transportation Department	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
14	Illinois	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
15	Indiana	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
16	Iowa	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
17	Kansas	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
18	Kentucky	Transportation Cabinet	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
19	Louisiana	Department of Transportation & Development	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
20	Maine	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
21	Maryland	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
22	Massachusetts	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
23	Michigan	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
24	Minnesota	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
25	Mississippi	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
26	Missouri	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	Montana	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
28	Nebraska	Nebraska Department of Roads	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
29	Nevada	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
30	New Hampshire	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
31	New Jersey	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
32	New Mexico	Highway and Transportation Department	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
33	New York	New York State Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
34	North Carolina	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
35	North Dakota	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
36	Ohio	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
37	Oklahoma	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
38	Oregon	Department of Transportation	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
39	Pennsylvania	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
41	Rhode Island	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
42	South Carolina	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
43	South Dakota	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

44	Tennessee	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
45	Texas	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
46	Utah	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
47	Vermont	Agency of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
48	Virginia	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
49	Washington	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
50	West Virginia	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
51	Wisconsin	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
52	Wyoming	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL			**100%**	**98%**	**96%**	**75%**	**82%**	**86%**	**25%**	**67%**	**49%**	**59%**	**65%**

State Transportation Agencies			Places people can Find Info			Programs to Solicit Viewpoints and Resolve Differences			
			Project web sites	Hotlines	Drop-in Centers	Focus Groups	Public Opinion Surveys	Facilitation	Negotiation / Mediation
1	Alabama	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	Alaska	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	Arizona	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
4	Arkansas	Highway and Transportation Department	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
5	California	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
6	Colorado	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Connecticut	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
8	Delaware	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
9	District of Columbia	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
10	Florida	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
11	Georgia	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
12	Hawaii	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
13	Idaho	Idaho Transportation Department	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	Illinois	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
15	Indiana	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
16	Iowa	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
17	Kansas	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18	Kentucky	Transportation Cabinet	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
19	Louisiana	Department of Transportation & Development	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
20	Maine	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
21	Maryland	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
22	Massachusetts	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
23	Michigan	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
24	Minnesota	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
25	Mississippi	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
26	Missouri	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
27	Montana	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
28	Nebraska	Nebraska Department of Roads	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
29	Nevada	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

30	New Hampshire	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
31	New Jersey	Department of Transportation	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
32	New Mexico	Highway and Transportation Department	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
33	New York	New York State Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
34	North Carolina	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
35	North Dakota	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
36	Ohio	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
37	Oklahoma	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
38	Oregon	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
39	Pennsylvania	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
40	Rhode Island	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
41	South Carolina	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
42	South Dakota	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
43	Tennessee	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
44	Texas	Department of Transportation	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
45	Utah	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
46	Vermont	Agency of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
47	Virginia	Department of Transportation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
48	Washington	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
49	West Virginia	Department of Transportation	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
50	Wisconsin	Department of Transportation	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
51	Wyoming	Department of Transportation	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
TOTAL			**94%**	**88%**	**39%**	**94%**	**86%**	**76%**	**76%**

	State Transportation Agencies		Special Events		Strategies to Attract More Participants																	Others		
			Transportation Fairs	Games/Contests	Follow up meeting notice by mail, phone, FAX	Survey communication preferences	Focus meeting on special issue	Publicize meetings through other groups	List meetings on calendar of events	Engage support through local schools	Develop easy slogan/logo to attract interest	Establish info networks of leadership groups that use word of mouth	Offer low-cost meeting perks (food, child care, etc…)	Offer alternative modes of participation (phone in comments, etc...)	Use prominent people to spark interest	Include senior, high-level staff	Evaluate afterwards	Follow-up	Give key individuals special invitations	Court press coverage / establish good media relations	Employ radio coverage	Role playing	Site visits	Non traditional meeting places (mall, county fairs, etc...)
1	Alabama	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
2	Alaska	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
3	Arizona	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
4	Arkansas	Highway and Transportation Department	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
5	California	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	Colorado	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
7	Connecticut	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
8	Delaware	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
9	District of Columbia	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
10	Florida	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
11	Georgia	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
12	Hawaii	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
13	Idaho	Idaho Transportation Department	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
14	Illinois	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
15	Indiana	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
16	Iowa	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
17	Kansas	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
18	Kentucky	Transportation Cabinet	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
19	Louisiana	Department of Transportation & Development	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
20	Maine	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
21	Maryland	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
22	Massachusetts	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
23	Michigan	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
24	Minnesota	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
25	Mississippi	Department of Transportation	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
26	Missouri	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
27	Montana	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

#	State	Agency																						
28	Nebraska	Nebraska Department of Roads	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
29	Nevada	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
30	New Hampshire	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
31	New Jersey	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
32	New Mexico	Highway and Transportation Department	0	0	0	1	1	0		1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
33	New York	New York State Department of Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
34	North Carolina	Department of Transportation	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
35	North Dakota	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
36	Ohio	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
37	Oklahoma	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
38	Oregon	Department of Transportation	0	0	1	0	1	0		1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
39	Pennsylvania	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
40	Rhode Island	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
41	South Carolina	Department of Transportation	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
42	South Dakota	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
43	Tennessee	Department of Transportation	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
44	Texas	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
45	Utah	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
46	Vermont	Agency of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
47	Virginia	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
48	Washington	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
49	West Virginia	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1		1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
50	Wisconsin	Department of Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
51	Wyoming	Department of Transportation	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
	TOTAL		20%	92%	51%	51%	100%	14%	96%	100%	100%	29%	22%	100%	32%	100%	100%	100%	33%	94%	90%	20%	29%	22%

APPENDIX E

Social Media and Online Tools

Appendix E consists of a large matrix identifying the most popular forms of social media and online tools employed by each state DOT. Details regarding this matrix are conveyed in section 4.3 of this report.

State Transportation Agency		511		Facebook		Twitter		YouTube		Vimeo		Instagram		Flickr		Blog		Linkedin		Pinterest	
Alabama	Department of Transportation	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Alaska	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@AlaskaDOTPF	1	YouTube	1	Vimeo	1	@alaska_dotpf	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
Arizona	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@ArizonaDOT	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
Arkansas	Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD)	0	-	0	-	1	@AHTD	0	-	1	Vimeo	0	-	1	Flickr	1	Issuu	0	-	0	-
California	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@CaltransHQ	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Colorado	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@ColoradoDOT	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	1	Linkedin	0	-
Connecticut	Department of Transportation	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Delaware	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	@DelawareDOT	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	Blog	0	-	0	-
District of Columbia	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	@ddotdc	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	1	Blog	0	-	1	pinterest
Florida	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	Wordpress	0	-	0	-
Georgia	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Hawaii	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@DOTHawaii	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Idaho	Idaho Transportation Department	1	511	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Illinois	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	@IDOT_Illinois	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	Linkedin	0	-
Indiana	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	@INDOT	1	YouTube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	Linkedin	0	-
Iowa	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	1	@iowadot	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	pinterest
Kansas	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@KDOTHQ	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	1	Blog	0	-	1	pinterest
Kentucky	Transportation Cabinet	1	511	1	FB	1	@kytc	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Louisiana	Department of Transportation & Development	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Maine	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@MaineDOT1	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Maryland	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	1	pinterest
Massachusetts	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@massdot	1	Youtube	0	-	1	@massdot	1	Flickr	1	Blog	0	-	0	-
Michigan	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	@michigandot	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Minnesota	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	1	@mndot	0	-	0	-	1	Linkedin	0	-
Mississippi	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Acounts	1	Youtube	0	-	1	@modot_statewide	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
Missouri	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
Montana	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@mdtroadreport	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	1	pinterest
Nebraska	Nebraska Department of Roads	1	511	0	-	1	@NDOR	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Nevada	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@nevadadot	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
New Hampshire	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	@NewHampshireDOT	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
New Jersey	Department of Transportation	1	511	0	-	1	@NJDOT_info	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-

State	Agency	#		#		#		#		#		#		#		#		#		#	
New Mexico	Highway and Transportation Department	1	511	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
New York	New York State Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@NYSDOT	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
North Carolina	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
North Dakota	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	0	-	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
Ohio	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Oklahoma	Department of Transportation	0	-	0	-	1	@OKDOT	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Oregon	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	1	Blog	0	-	0	-
Pennsylvania	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@penndotnews	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Puerto Rico	Department of Transportation and Public Works	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Rhode Island	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@RIDOTnews	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
South Carolina	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@SCDOTPress	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
South Dakota	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@SouthDakotaDOT	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Tennessee	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	1	pinterest
Texas	Department of Transportation	0	-	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Utah	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
Vermont	Agency of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	@511VT	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
Virginia	Department of Transportation	1	511	1	FB	1	Twitter Accounts	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	1	Linkedin	0	-
Washington	Department of Transportation	1	511	0	-	1	@wsdot	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
West Virginia	Department of Transportation	1	511	0	-	1	@wvdot	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	Flickr	0	-	0	-	0	-
Wisconsin	Department of Transportation	1	511	0	-	1	@WisconsinDOT	1	Youtube	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Wyoming	Department of Transportation	1	511	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
TOTAL		**38**		**75%**		**87%**		**71%**		**4%**		**10%**		**38%**		**13%**		**10%**		**12%**	

APPENDIX F

Research Team's Participation and Experiences

The research team had the opportunity to attend two public information open houses (PIOH) that the Georgia Department of Transportation held. These two open houses allowed the research team to experience GDOT's public involvement on a smaller scale project in Leesburg, GA (March 10, 2016, 4 - 6 pm) and a larger scale project in Garden City, GA (June 28, 2016, 11 am – 1 pm; 4 – 7 pm).

The PIOH in Leesburg, GA

The Georgia Department of Transportation invited the public to an informational open house for a proposed project to replace an intersection with a roundabout in Leesburg, GA. This open house was held at the local public library from 4-6 pm on a Thursday. This public was encouraged to come ask questions to GDOT officials and submit comments pertaining to this proposed project. There were five public officials that attended and about 25 non-public officials that came to the open house. Some of the observations were noted in the following points:

- There was minimal advertisement for this event: one sign that was displayed outside the library that was hard to see from the road, and one inside the building
- The doors were shut to this informational meeting, and most people entering the building were confused as to where to go and if they were allowed to enter
- There was a job fair that the library was hosting that was also a contributing factor to the traffic coming into the building
- The GDOT officials told us the most popular time that people visited this informational meeting was at 4 pm
- GDOT did not have to pay for this space to host this meeting, and usually uses any public facility that is available for these types of meetings
- This open house was announced in the community's newspapers, and no social media was used for this event
- The comments were submitted at the public open house, or could be mailed to GDOT. GDOT also responds to these comments by mail
- This open house also had 18 GDOT employees involved in this event, they have been present in the room, most of the time on their phones, and a few that were welcoming the public as they came in
- There was also a virtual display of the proposed roundabout. An animation was run periodically and it was available for replay to the public
- There were also magnets, and pencils as free giveaways campaigning "DRIVE ALERT. ARRIVE ALIVE"

The PIOH in Garden City, GA

The Georgia Department of Transportation invited the public to an informational open house for the proposed I-16 Widening from I-95 to I-516 and the I-16 at I-95 Interchange Reconstruction projects.

There were two time slots for this open house, 11 am – 1 pm and 4 pm - 7 pm, at the City Hall in Garden City, GA.

This open house provided the public with conceptual project displays and encouraged the public to ask questions and provide their feedback on the proposed projects. There were about 10-15 GDOT employees and 4 consultants from *Arcadis.*

- The advertisement for this event began four weeks prior and consisted of two press releases, road signs, and announcements in the local newspaper and on the Public Involvement (PI) website
- Memos were also sent to homeowner associations in the area of the proposed project
- A main concern of the public was the noise; so, it was addressed that a noise impact assessment and noise barrier analysis would be performed
- There was a deathly wreck prior to this event; therefore, there was news coverage from the following stations: 3 WSAV, WJCL22 and WTOC
- An early conceptual design was presented at this PIOH; therefore, there were no visual animations. There were only displays of the project plans, renderings, and examples of noise barriers
- The project displays and plans were available on the website for ten days following this event
- This event was GDOT's premiere using online registration interface with i-PADs/tablets for public registration and feedback/comments
- Written comments were also available and could be turned in at the event or mailed in by July 13, 2016
- Online comments were also an alternative until July 13, 2016
- The comments would be answered in one overall comment response letter/document, and sent to each individual who commented
- GDOT did not have to pay for this space to host this meeting, and usually uses any public facility that is available for these types of meetings (also an ADA compliant facility).
- The displays are usually provided by the one who designs, in this case Arcadis provided the conceptual displays
- The planning for this PIOH falls under the Environmental planners (OES)

APPENDIX G

Technology Formats for Visuals

#	STATES & Links to State Government Websites	Links to Transportation Agency Websites	Initials of Participating Research Assistants	Technology Formats for Visuals (Page 1 of 2)								
				Social Media	Images	GIS Maps	Project Websites	Interactive Displays	3D Presentations	Animations	Blogs	Information Kiosks
1	Alabama	DOT	NP	√	√	√			√	√		
2	Alaska	DOT	NP	√								
3	Arizona	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
4	Arkansas	Hwy & Transp Dept	NP	√	√	√		√	√	√		
5	California	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	
6	Colorado	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√					
7	Connecticut	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√	√				
8	Delaware	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
9	DC	DOT	NP									
10	Florida	DOT	NP	√	√		√	√	√	√		
11	Hawaii	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
12	Idaho	Transp Dept	NP									√
13	Illinois	DOT	NP									
14	Indiana	DOT	NP	√	√			√				
15	Iowa	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
16	Kansas	DOT	NP	√	√	√		√			√	
17	Kentucky	Transp Cabinet	NP									
18	Louisiana	DOT & Develop	NP									
19	Maryland	DOT	NP									
20	Massachusetts	DOT	NP									

#	STATES & Links to State Government Websites	Links to Transportation Agency Websites	Initials of Participating Research Assistants	Social Media	Images	GIS Maps	Project Websites	Interactive Displays	3D Presentations	Animations	Blogs	Information Kiosks
21	Michigan	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	
22	Minnesota	DOT	NP	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
23	Mississippi	DOT	NP						√			
24	Missouri	DOT	NP									
25	Montana	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√				
26	Nebraska	Dept of Roads	JG			√	√	√				
27	Nevada	DOT	JG	√	√		√		√	√	√	
28	New Hampshire	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
29	New Jersey	DOT	JG									
30	New Mexico	Hwy & Transp Dept	JG		√	√	√					
31	New York	State DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√				
32	North Carolina	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
33	North Dakota	DOT	JG	√		√	√	√				
34	Ohio	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√		√			
35	Oklahoma	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
36	Oregon	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
37	Pennsylvania	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
38	Rhode Island	DOT	JG									
39	South Carolina	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√				
40	South Dakota	DOT	JG	√	√	√						
41	Tennessee	DOT	JG									
42	Texas	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√		√	√		
43	Utah	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
44	Vermont	Agency of Transp	JG	√	√	√	√	√			√	
45	Virginia	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
46	Washington	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
47	West Virginia	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√		√	√		
48	Wisconsin	DOT	JG	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
49	Wyoming	DOT	JG									

APPENDIX H

Visual Preference Survey

1. Do you find the use of visuals beneficial for your understanding of GDOT projects? (Photo simulations, 3D Modeling, Video animations, etc.) Select from **1**(Strongly Disagree), **2** (Disagree). **3** (Neutral), **4** (Agree), **5** (Strongly Agree).

   1   2   3   4   5

   Additional comment: _____.

2. Do you think that the employed visual resources are appropriately communicating project goals, challenges, and alternatives for GDOT projects? Select from **1** (Strongly Disagree), **2** (Disagree), **3** (Neutral), **4** (Agree), **5** (Strongly Agree).

   1   2   3   4   5

   Additional comment: _____.

3. Do you feel that the visualization resources are properly modeling the existing and proposed conditions? Select from **1** (Strongly Disagree), **2** (Disagree), **3** (Neutral), **4** (Agree), **5** (Strongly Agree).

   1   2   3   4   5

   Additional comment: _____.

4. Where did you experience GDOT's visual services?
   a. GDOT Website
   b. Public Information Open House / Hearing
   c. Social Media Sites (i.e., Facebook, YouTube, blogs, etc.)
   d. Other _____.

5. Listed below are the more common visual technique(s) employed by GDOT to interact with the public. Please select the ones you have witnessed/experienced in your interaction with GDOT through their (GDOT) website, Public Information Open Houses / Hearings, their Social Media Sites, etc.
   a. *Photo-paste* (i.e., "before and after views of relatively small projects")
   b. *Photo-matching* (i.e., "composite/overlay of proposed design data onto photo   perspective of relatively large projects")
   c. *Renderings* (i.e., "photorealistic views from any perspective of the modeled project")
   d. *Animations* (i.e., "walk-throughs or fly-throughs experience of the proposed project design")

e. *VISSIM Animations* (i.e., simulation representing proposed design including actual design traffic)

f. Any other *technique*? _____.

6. Based on your selection from the previous question and using the following scale, please rate the experienced visual technique effectiveness for a clear understanding of the proposed GDOT projects: **1** (Not effective), **2** (Somewhat effective), **3** (Neutral), **4** (Effective), **5** (Very effective).

a. Photo-paste   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Additional comment: _____.

b. Photo-matching   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Additional comment: _____.

c. Renderings   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Additional comment: _____.

d. Animations   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Additional comment: _____.

e. VISSIM Animations **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Additional comment: _____.

f. Any other technique? _____.

    1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Additional comment: _____.