

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SURVEY RESULTS FOR THE TOPSAIL AREA COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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In cooperation with:

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Organization, Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization,
Town of Holly Ridge, Town of Topsail Beach, Surf City,
Town of North Topsail Beach

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Introduction

A critical element of the comprehensive transportation planning process is public participation. Active public involvement will help to ensure that the comprehensive transportation plan that is developed for a particular area meets the objectives of the communities. If the plan is not related to the values held by the community, then it is unlikely that the plan will be implemented and used to its fullest potential.

A Goals and Objectives (G&O) Survey is a means of determining the values of an area. This survey attempts to identify the area's perception of transportation-related issues, and may help to pinpoint concerns that should be addressed in the comprehensive transportation plan.

The survey is also a useful tool for the local government, engineering staff, and the area as a whole. The survey results are used to guide the development of a comprehensive transportation plan that will best meet the needs and values of the area.

Survey Methodology

The goals and objectives survey form that was used was developed by Transportation Planning Branch staff in conjunction with the Topsail Area CTP Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from Onslow and Pender Counties, the Cape Fear and Down East RPOs, and the towns of Topsail Beach, North Topsail Beach, Surf City, and Holly Ridge. The survey included yes/no questions, questions that involve ranking the importance of transportation improvements and goals, and several questions requiring a short answer that dealt with specific transportation topics. The survey is presented in **Appendix A**.

The survey was distributed in two formats as determined by the Steering Committee. It was placed on the website Survey Monkey. The survey was available on this website and a link was posted on the homepages of all the towns and counties involved. This was done to allow anyone that visited the town and county websites access to the survey. In addition, one hundred random addresses were gathered from each of the following: Pender County, Onslow County, Topsail Beach, North Topsail Beach, and Surf City. From the 500 addresses submitted, a total of 462 paper surveys were mailed out to the homeowners of the area. This was done to get a sampling of all the persons in the planning area and to engage minority populations and persons without internet access.

Of the original 462 distributed surveys, 17 were returned due to incorrect addresses, 48 surveys were completed and returned by mail to the NCDOT and the various local town halls, and 194 surveys were completed on the Survey Monkey website. The total number of surveys received was 242 (52% of total distribution).

Survey Results

The results of the planning area's goals in the development of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan are shown in **Appendix B, Figure 1**. The goals were ranked as very important, important, or not important. As indicated by the graph, goals with over 50% in the very important category were increased transportation choice, community and rural culture preservation, and environmental protection. The results indicate that the citizens see the importance of keeping the rural and cultural character of the area intact. They would also like to have an opportunity to use pedestrian and bicycle facilities as much as possible. This would aid the goal of having the community preserve its cultural and rural character a top priority. While the participants in the survey say they would enjoy increased opportunities to bicycle and walk, they do not see the use of public transportation as an important goal. Safer, efficient travel times are important and will assist in enhancing the economic growth of the community, another important goal in the development of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

The next question posed in the survey was to indicate agreement/disagreement with strategies of increasing a road's ability to carry traffic. The results are illustrated in **Appendix B, Figure 2**. The options were building additional travel lanes, controlling the

frequency and locations of driveways and cross streets that access the road, and making improvements to intersections such as better traffic signal timing. Over 90% of the group agreed that making improvements to intersections, including better signal timing, is a positive strategy for improving the amount of traffic a road can carry. The citizens also indicated that controlling the frequency of driveways and cross streets was important with 75% in agreement. Building additional travel lanes was important as well, with just over 60% in agreement. These results show that the community supports moving traffic through the area with improvements to intersections, while minimizing additional traffic lanes.

Participants of the survey were then asked to identify if there were concerns in the areas of safety and accidents, congestion, and truck traffic. If they answered yes then they were prompted to give specific locations in the planning area where this was a problem. The specific answers and data collected are located in **Table B-1** through **Table B-6**. 64% of the answers indicated that there were no safety concerns in the area, while 92 participants think that there are safety or accident problems. NC 50 and NC 210 on and off the island constituted for 69% of the open-ended responses. Nine people responded that the speed limits on NC 210 and NC 50 on the island were too high and provided a risk to commuters. Only 91 of the 242 survey participants felt they had to find an alternate route because the direct route was too congested. This congested route was identified as NC 50/210 corridor near the Surf City Bridge and in the heart of Surf City. Truck traffic was found to be a minor problem with only 13% in agreement. The trouble spots identified are NC 50/NC 210 on the mainland, parking on sidewalks, and along South Shore Drive.

The next survey question consisted of asking what areas or roads citizens would like improved access. The choices included are listed in **Table B-7**. Participants were allowed to choose more than one response and also to add any areas not listed. These additions are indicated in **Table B-8**. Wilmington was selected by 57% of the respondents and I-40 was chosen by 55%. NC 210 and NC 50 were second and third among routes with 36% and 27%, respectively. Hampstead was selected by 20% of the participants making it the only municipality over that threshold other than Wilmington.

The next set of questions concentrated on the areas of pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit. Participants were asked if they would use those types of facilities if they were built or improved and where they would like to see each in the planning area. In regards to sidewalks, 71% of those surveyed indicated they would use that type of facility. The majority wanted them located in Surf City and on the entire length of Topsail Island as shown in **Table B-9** and **Table B-10**. The respondents were then asked that if they would use off-road trails or greenways and where they would like to see them built. Of the 67% that answered “yes” three-quarters indicated they would like to see them on the entire length of Topsail Island, in Surf City, and in North Topsail Beach (see **Table B-11**). 62% of those surveyed said they would use on road bicycle facilities if they were provided. The majority wanted this type of improvement on all roads along the island according to **Table B-12**. Contrary to the bicycle and pedestrian improvements, there was not a majority of positive responses to mass transit. An average of 75% of the

survey participants said they would not use bus service or commuter rail in the planning area. A yes response was given by only 22% of the community when asked if they would use park and ride lots. However, of those who responded positively, 36% would prefer a park and ride lot in the Holly Ridge area.

The final question was open-ended. Participants were asked to list the key transportation issues in the planning area. All 102 responses are listed in **Table B-18**. The top two issues that constituted over 50% of the responses were summer traffic congestion and the replacement of the swing bridge over the waterway in Surf City. Bicycle/pedestrian safety and lowering of speed limits were the next highest responses and accounted for over 30% of the answers.

Conclusions

Based upon the results of this survey, the citizens of the Topsail Area take an active interest in the transportation system of the planning area. By examining these results, it appears that environmental protection and preserving the community and rural culture are primary goals for the area. In addition, the community is concerned with congestion issues during the peak summer season and safety concerns throughout the area. They would like to see better signal timing on the island at intersections and lower speed limits. The community views bicycle and pedestrian facilities as an important part of the transportation network and would like to see this type of facility used across the planning area. The citizens within the area have evaluated which areas of comprehensive transportation planning are important through this survey. In a cooperative effort between the NCDOT and local governments, the CTP will address the needs of the area and incorporate the goals and objectives from this survey.

Appendix A

Topsail Area* Transportation Survey

*Includes the municipalities of North Topsail Beach, Topsail Beach, Surf City, and Holly Ridge as well as surrounding areas. A map of the study area is attached.

The Transportation Planning Branch of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, in cooperation with Topsail Island, the Cape Fear RPO and the Down East RPO is developing a transportation plan for the area. The transportation plan is a long-range plan that identifies major transportation improvements that will be needed over the next **30 years**. This survey is a means of identifying transportation issues that are important to the citizens, officials, and businesses of the Topsail Island area. This survey can also be completed and submitted at the following website:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/topsailareasurvey>

1. How important are the following goals?
(Please **check** the box that describes the importance of the following goals.)

GOAL:	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Increased Transportation Choices <i>Increased, safer opportunities to walk and bike to destinations such as sidewalks and bicycle lanes</i>			
Increased Public Transportation Options <i>Bus or rail service to destinations; Park-n-ride lots to facilitate carpooling, vanpooling, and transit service</i>			
Safer, More Efficient Travel Times <i>Safer traffic calming measures with more turning and deceleration lanes and fewer intersections; more connector roads; less congestion</i>			
Community and Rural Culture Preservation <i>Keeping businesses in central business areas; preservation of significant existing buildings and neighborhoods; maintaining the rural culture and landscape</i>			
Environmental Protection <i>Minimizing the impact on wetlands, streams, and wildlife areas; reducing air pollution; developing greenway and wildlife corridors</i>			
Economic Growth <i>Building or improving roads, railways, and infrastructure (including island accessibility) to attract new businesses and to allow existing businesses to expand and prosper</i>			
Service of Special Needs <i>Better transportation services for special needs, elderly, and disabled residents</i>			

2. Please indicate below whether you agree or disagree with the strategy of how a road's ability to carry traffic should be increased:
(Please **check** the box that describes the importance of the following strategies.)

STRATEGY:	Agree	Disagree
Building additional traffic lanes		
Controlling the frequency and locations of driveways and cross streets that access the road		
Making improvements to intersections, better traffic signal timing		

3. Are you concerned with safety or crash problems at any specific locations?

Yes No

If yes, please list specific locations:

4. When traveling in your area, do you find that you often have to go out of your way to get to your destination because the most direct route is too congested?

Yes No

If yes, please list specific locations:

5. Is truck traffic a problem in the area?

Yes No

If yes, please list specific locations:

6. What areas or roads would you like to have improved access to?
(Please **check** all that apply)

Wilmington		South Carolina please be more specific:
Jacksonville		
Camp Lejeune		Other please list:
Hampstead		
I-40		
US 17		
NC 210		
NC 50		

7. The new transportation plan will include recommendations for new pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit facilities as well as improvements to existing facilities. Would you use the following transportation facilities if they were built or improved?
(Please **check** the appropriate box and **write in** the locations)

	Yes	No
Sidewalks If yes, where?		
Off-road trails or greenways for walking and biking If yes, where?		
On-road bicycle facilities such as bike lanes and wide shoulders If yes, where?		
Bus service on the island		
Bus service to Wilmington		
Bus service to Jacksonville		
Commuter rail		
Park-n-ride lots (<i>parking areas at transit stations or bus stops to facilitate the use of public transportation and carpooling</i>) If yes, where?		

8. What are the key transportation issues in your area?

We would like to know a little about you so that we can create a group profile. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Please answer the following questions:

9. What is your age?

under 18	
18-24	
25-34	
35-44	
45-64	
65-74	
over 74	

10. How would you classify your race?

White	
Black	
Native American	
Hispanic	
Asian	
Other	

11. How many people live in your household including yourself?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7 or above	

12. What was your household income last year?

Below \$30,000	
\$30,000-\$39,999	
\$40,000-\$53,799	
\$53,800-\$70,000	
Above \$70,000	
Don't know	

13. In what community of Topsail Island do you live?
(Please **check** only **one** box. If you live in a municipality, check a municipality. If you live in an unincorporated area, please check a county.)

Municipalities		County	
Topsail Beach		Onslow	
North Topsail Beach		Pender	
Surf City			
Holly Ridge			
I do not live in the study area			

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input is vital in developing a plan that meets the needs of the citizens of Topsail Island. Please return this survey to the address below by **June 1, 2006**.

Mail to:

*Tyler Bray
NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch
1554 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1554*

or

Drop off:

At any of the local municipal town halls of Holly Ridge, Topsail Beach, North Topsail Beach, and Surf City or the administrative office of Onslow and Pender counties.

Appendix B

Importance of Goals in the Development of CTP

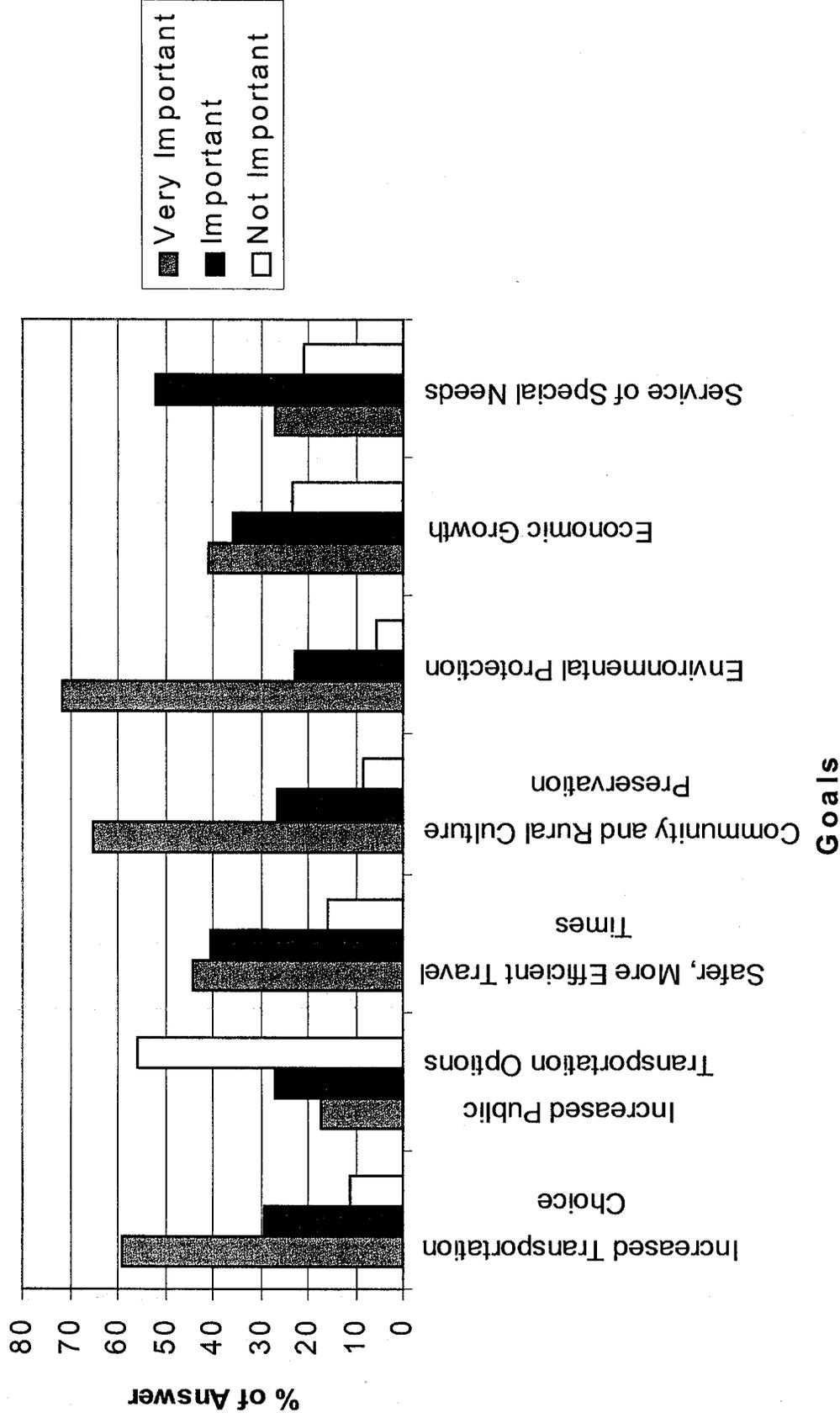


Figure 1

Strategies of How a Road's Ability to carry traffic should be Increased

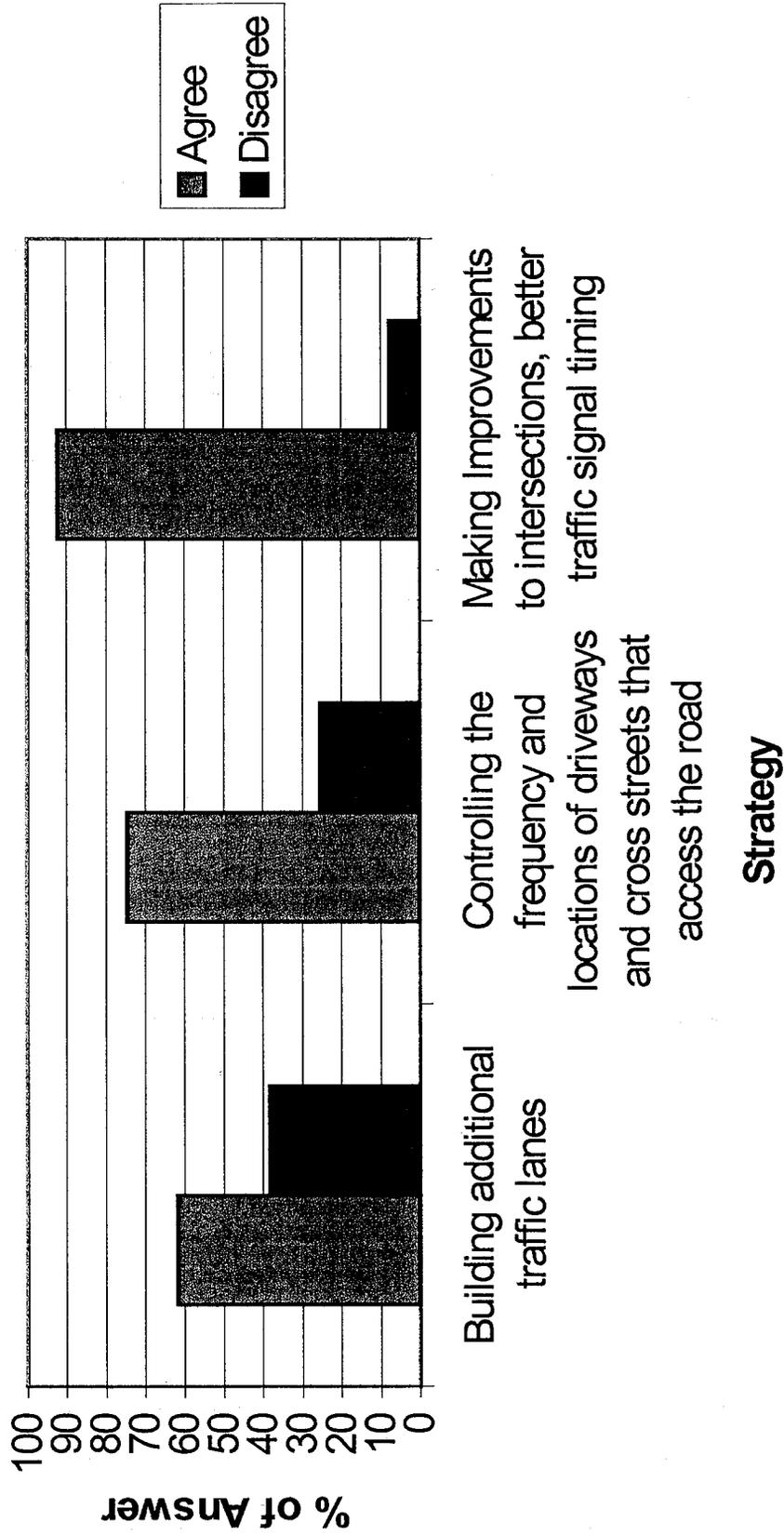


Figure 2

Are you concerned with safety or crash problems at any specific areas?

Table B-1

Answer	Total Response	Percent Response
Yes	82	36.1
No	145	63.9

List the specific locations where safety or accident problems are a concern.

Table B-2

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Intersection of NC 50 and NC 210 (mainland)	35	38.0
Intersection of NC 50 and NC 210 (on the island)	25	27.2
Entire route of NC 50 and NC 210 on the island (too fast)	9	9.8
Atkinson Point Road and NC 210/NC 50	6	6.5
New River Inlet Road (SR 1568) and NC 210	3	3.3
NC 210 and US 17 (south)	3	3.3
US 17 and Sloop Point Road	1	1.1
US 17 and Long Leaf Drive	1	1.1
US 17 and NC 172	1	1.1
Peru Road and Old Folkstone Road	1	1.1
US 17 and NC 50	1	1.1
Davis Ave. and S. Anderson Blvd.	1	1.1
NC 50 and Little Kinston Road	1	1.1
NC 210 near Dixon Elementary School	1	1.1
NC 172 (left turns in Snead Ferry)	1	1.1
Cedar Ave between NC 210/NC 50/US 17	1	1.1
NC 210 and SR 1185 and SR 1215 (Frazier Curve)	1	1.1
Total Responses	92	100

When traveling in your area, do you find that you often have to go out of your way to get to your destination because the most direct route is too congested?

Table B-3

Answer	Total Response	Percent Response
Yes	91	39.2
No	141	60.8

List the specific locations where you must go out of your way to get to your destination because the most direct route is too congested.

Table B-4

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
NC 50/NC 210 and Atkinson Point Road (bridge)	33	62.3
NC 210 and NC 50 (on Topsail Island)	20	37.7
Total Responses	53	100

Is truck traffic a problem in your area?

Table B-5

Answer	Total Response	Percent Response
Yes	29	12.6
No	202	87.4

List the specific locations in which truck traffic is a problem.

Table B-6

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
NC 50/NC 210 (mainland)	3	30.0
Parking on Sidewalks	2	20.0
S. Shore Drive	2	20.0
Sloop Point Road	1	10.0
Pine Needle Way	1	10.0
US 17	1	10.0
Total Responses	10	100

What areas or roads would you like improved access to? (Please check all that apply)

Table B-7

Answer	Total Response	Percent Response
Wilmington	120	57.1
Jacksonville	35	16.7
Camp Lejeune	9	4.3
Hampstead	43	20.5
I-40	115	54.8
US 17	61	29
NC 210	76	36.2
NC 50	56	26.7
South Carolina	6	2.9

Other areas or roads that you would like access.

Table B-8

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Southern access to Topsail Island	3	21.4
Brunswick County, NC	2	14.3
New Bern, NC	2	14.3
I-95	2	14.3
Myrtle Beach, SC	2	14.3
Greenville, NC	1	7.1
Charlestown, SC	1	7.1
Castle Hayne, NC	1	7.1
Total Responses	14	100

The new transportation plan will include recommendations for new pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit facilities as well as improvements to existing facilities. Would you use the following transportation facilities if they were built or improved?

Sidewalks

Table B-9

Answer	Total Response	Percent Response
Yes	163	71.2
No	66	28.8

Where would you like to see sidewalks?

Table B-10

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Surf City	34	31.8
Total Length of Topsail Island	30	28.0
NC 210 (mainland)	12	11.2
Topsail Beach	8	7.5
NC 50 (mainland)	7	6.5
North Topsail Beach	7	6.5
S. Shore Drive	4	3.7
Island Drive	3	2.8
New River Inlet Road	2	1.9
Total Responses	107	100

Off-road trails or greenways

Table B-11

Answer	Total Response	Percent Response
Yes	152	66.7
No	76	33.3

Where would you like to see additional off-road trails or greenways for walking and biking?

Table B-12

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Total Length of Topsail Island	23	37.1
Surf City	15	24.2
North Topsail Beach	10	16.1
Mainland	8	12.9
Holly Ridge	3	4.8
Off island parks	1	1.6
Holly Shelter	1	1.6
Power line Right of Ways	1	1.6
Total Responses	62	100

On-road bicycle facilities

Table B-13

Answer	Total Response	Percent Response
Yes	134	61.5
No	84	38.5

Where would you like to see additional on-road bicycle facilities such as bike lanes and wide shoulders?

Table B-14

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
All Facilities on Topsail Island	26	29.5
All major roads	22	25.0
Surf City	18	20.5
All Facilities on the mainland within the planning area	8	9.1
Topsail Beach	7	8.0
North Topsail Beach	6	6.8
Sloop Point Road	1	1.1
Total Responses	88	100

Bus Service and Commuter Rail

Table B-15

	Total Response	Percent Response
Bus Service on the island		
Yes	54	24.4
No	167	75.6
Bus Service to Wilmington		
Yes	65	29.4
No	156	70.6
Bus Service to Jacksonville		
Yes	45	20.8
No	171	79.2
Commuter Rail		
Yes	52	24.3
No	162	75.7

Park and Ride Lots

Table B-16

Answer	Total Response	Percent Response
Yes	49	22.3
No	171	77.7

Where would you like to see park-and-ride lots in the area?

Table B-17

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Holly Ridge	8	36.4
US 17 and NC 210 intersection (south)	5	22.7
Food Lion (Surf City)	4	18.2
US 17 and NC 210 intersection (north)	1	4.5
Topsail Island Police Department	1	4.5
Pier Area	1	4.5
South Topsail Island	1	4.5
North Topsail Beach	1	4.5
Total Responses	22	100

What are the key transportation issues in the area?

Table B-18

ISSUE	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Summer Traffic Congestion	34	33.3
Replacement of Swing bridge in Surf City to a High Rise Bridge	22	21.6
Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety	18	17.6
Lower Speed Limits	13	12.7
Public Transportation During the summer	5	4.9
Lack of parking on the island	3	2.9
More traffic lights	3	2.9
Main island road is too narrow	2	2.0
Large Developments in Surf City	1	1.0
Too many trucks	1	1.0
Total Responses	102	100