


# Goals and Objectives Surveys

Transportation Planning Branch		Approved: April 4, 2007 Version 1
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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to present the Goals and Objectives (G&O) Survey as a valid method for capturing the values of a local area relating to transportation to aid the development of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

## **Background**

The G&O Survey is a public involvement technique that is used to help identify a local area's perception of transportation-related issues, identify concerns that should be addressed during the development of a CTP, and to develop a vision for the community. The G&O Survey is also a useful tool for the local area as the survey results are used to guide the development of a CTP that will best meet the needs and values of the community.

To understand how the G&O Survey can pinpoint the above issues, it is important to understand the concepts involved. The system of preferences that governs actions within society is classified as *values*. These consist of issues that are held in high regard; they are easily identified, but not necessarily measurable. Values can differ greatly between individuals, as can the measures of importance of a specific value. In addition, values may change over the course of time. The values that have been historically connected to transportation include safety, comfort, aesthetics, convenience, mobility, and costs.

Values may be further reduced to *goals*, which are a compilation of statements that express the desire of society. Goals tend to establish ideal conditions as viewed by the individual, the community and the local government. One particular goal may conflict with another, and these conflicts must be resolved in order to proceed with the planning process. Therefore, the public, the governmental officials and the planning staff must jointly determine the realistic, non-conflicting goals that the planning area will strive toward, or determine the importance that should be placed on any conflicting or competing goals.

For each goal that is chosen, there must be one or more objectives. An objective is a means by which a goal can be realized. The recommended improvements that are established in conjunction with the CTP are the objectives of the planning area.

If desired as part of the CTP development process, the G&O Survey is most appropriately implemented at the beginning of the transportation planning study. In addition to determining up front what is important to the citizens of the planning area, initiating the G&O survey early in the planning process allows the survey to serve as an introduction to the transportation planning process. The survey usually includes a brief introduction explaining what a transportation plan is and how the area can benefit from having one. The survey also includes a wide variety of questions that should be tailored to each area when appropriate.

## **Responsibility**

For non-Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) areas, the Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) planning engineer is ultimately responsible for the G&O survey within an assigned transportation planning area. The planning engineer should guide the development and administration of the survey, as well as the compilation and dissemination of survey results. Coordination with local planning partners, including but not limited to the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) and planning area representatives, may also be necessary for the G&O Survey process.

A G&O survey is not necessarily required for every CTP study. In fact, the land use planning process that is a prerequisite to the CTP study may suffice for the G&O survey.

For MPO areas, the MPO is ultimately responsible for the G&O Survey, as well as all aspects of their public involvement process. The TPB planning engineer will work with the MPO in developing the survey and evaluating the results.

RPO areas may decide to do a region-wide G&O survey that could be used for several different CTP updates.

## **Policy, Regulatory, and Legal Requirements**

- The [Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act \(ISTEA\) of 1991](#) extended public involvement into the long-range transportation planning.
- The [Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century \(TEA-21\)](#) further emphasized the importance of public involvement and required additional consultation in the non-metropolitan areas.
- [North Carolina General Statute 136-66.2](#) requires any entity engaging in the development of a CTP to provide opportunity for public comments prior to adoption of the transportation plan.
- [North Carolina General Statute 136 Article 17](#) establishes the RPOs and defines their roles in transportation planning.

## **Scheduling and Time Constraints**

If desired as part of the CTP development process, the G&O Survey is most appropriately implemented at the beginning of the transportation planning study. Coordination with the local area regarding public involvement techniques to be employed is needed early on in the study process, as indicated in Procedure [Step 1](#). The total time dedicated to the survey will depend on the methods employed and level of participation of the planning partners, but an estimate of three to six months is described in Procedure [Step 3](#).

## **Procedures**

Follow the steps below to properly develop and administer G&O Surveys.

Step	Action
1	<p><b>Determine the need for the G&amp;O Survey.</b></p> <p>When coordinating with the local planning partners on the types of public outreach that are desirable for the CTP study, discuss the G&amp;O Survey with them as an option. The cost of such a survey can be a limiting factor. The decision whether or not to administer a G&amp;O Survey will depend on whether there is expected to be a reasonable response rate, what other visioning/planning activities have recently occurred, and the advantages of other public involvement techniques.</p>
2	<p><b>Determine the roles for each partner in the G&amp;O Survey process.</b></p> <p>While the planning engineer is ultimately responsible for the G&amp;O Survey, this process should involve participation from all planning partners. Early in the process, establish the roles that each partner will play:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will design the survey?</li> <li>• Who will determine what questions should be included in the survey?</li> <li>• Who will incur expenses associated with the survey (i.e., design (see Step 5), reproduction, distribution (see Step 6), data collection and analysis)?</li> <li>• Who will administer the survey?</li> <li>• Who will collect the completed survey?</li> <li>• Who will analyze and compile the collection of the survey?</li> <li>• Who will disseminate the results of the survey? How?</li> </ul> <p>It is highly desirable, and appropriate, that the RPO participate in the G&amp;O Survey process since one of their four core duties is to provide a forum for public participation in the transportation planning process.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> For MPO areas, the MPO is ultimately responsible for the G&amp;O Survey, as well as all aspects of their public involvement process. The TPB planning engineer will work with the MPO in developing the survey and evaluating the results.</p>
3	<p><b>Determine the G&amp;O Survey timeline.</b></p> <p>All planning partners playing a role in the process should agree upon the G&amp;O Survey timeline. This timeline should provide ample time for review of the survey instrument by all involved parties, for the public to submit responses to the survey and for compilation of survey results. It should be noted that the time required for a G&amp;O Survey may add time to the schedule for completing a CTP study, unless part or all of this work can occur concurrently with other tasks, such as data collection.</p> <p>While every survey will differ, the following are reasonable estimates of time needed for each phase of the survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop survey (Steps 4, 5 &amp; 6) – 4 to 8 weeks</li> <li>• Administer survey (Step 7) – 6 to 8 weeks</li> <li>• Compile &amp; document survey results (Steps 8 &amp; 9) – 2 to 4 weeks</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Determine the questions that should be included in the G&amp;O Survey.</b></p> <p>A wide variety of questions may be included in the G&amp;O Survey. These can be broken down into three basic categories: multiple choice, ranking and short answer. <i>Multiple choice questions</i> require the survey respondent to choose an answer from a list of options. These could also include simple “yes” or “no” questions, as well as questions that require the survey participant to indicate a lever of importance.</p>

Results of multiple choice questions can easily be compiled using charts, spreadsheets or graphs. The following is an example of a multiple-choice question.

- *To relieve congestion within the area, would you be willing to live within:*
  - a. 50 – 200 feet of a major road
  - b. 201 – 500 feet of a major road
  - c. 501 – 1000 feet of a major road
  - d. +1000 feet of a major road

*Ranking questions* present various issues and ask that the survey participant rate these based on the level of importance to him. The results can then be assimilated into a spreadsheet, illustrating how the public views those particular transportation issues. Problems can arise with this type of question if it is not clear to the participant that he is being asked to rank the issues – he may mistakenly assign the same level of importance to more than one issue, thus invalidating that particular survey response. Overall, ranking questions are helpful since they require the survey participant to make a trade-off between various issues. The following is an example of a ranking question.

- *Rank from 1 to 5 the ways to increase the traffic-carrying ability of a road based on importance to you (1 is most important; 5 is least important; each number should only be used once).*
  - Build turning lanes at intersections*
  - Build additional travel lanes on roads*
  - Control strip type development along roads*
  - Encourage people to carpool rather than drive individually*
  - Provide other ways for people to travel, such as bus*

*Short answer questions* give the survey respondent an opportunity to voice their opinions on transportation-related issues. Responses to this type of question cannot be compiled as easily as multiple choice or ranking questions, but they do offer valuable information. The results may help to pinpoint specific problems in the planning area, such as neighborhoods that have a lot of cut-through traffic or target areas where the locals perceive that a problem exists, such as high-accident intersections. The following is an example of a short answer question.

- *What are the key transportation issues in your area?*

Hints for developing the survey questions:

- Regardless of what questions become part of the G&O Survey you should engage the local partners to ensure that questions they feel are pertinent to the region are included.
- Do not make the survey too lengthy. People will be more likely to complete the survey if it is not extremely long and time consuming. In general, the survey should be no longer than a double-sided legal sheet of paper.
- Make the survey eye-catching. If the survey form is not visually appealing, people may tend to overlook and ignore it. On the other hand, people will notice an eye-catching survey and are more likely to complete it. Ways to accomplish this include using colored paper, multi-colored text or unconventional font styles.
- Do not bias survey questions. It is very easy to phrase questions in a manner that may dictate how an individual will answer. Be sure not to emphasize one answer

	<p>over another one in multiple choice questions or include questions that predispose a particular answer. [Refer to the <a href="#">Resources and Tools</a> section for sample G&amp;O Survey Questions]</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Determine the format of the survey.</b></p> <p>Several options are appropriate for the format of the G&amp;O Survey. Among these are mailed questionnaires, written self-administered surveys and online surveys. Both mailed questionnaires and written self-administered require providing copies for survey respondents, while online surveys require computer and Internet access for survey respondents. A combination of formats may be desirable. Costs as associated with each method and the responsibility for this cost should have been determined in <a href="#">Step 2</a>.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Determine the survey distribution.</b></p> <p><i>Who should get the survey?</i> Since the G&amp;O Survey is designed to solicit public opinion, it should be distributed to those individuals comprising the planning area: planning area residents, local officials and local emergency departments. In certain situations, it may be desirable to distribute the survey only to the local government, which is acceptable since these are elected officials representing the interests of the area’s citizens. Distributing the survey to residents, however, is always a good idea since it helps to ensure that the public is involved in the transportation planning process. Local emergency personnel – fire, police and rescue – are a valuable resource for determining the current state of the local transportation systems since they routinely travel throughout the area and may be aware of specific problems. Above all, if the survey is to be distributed to local citizens, be sure not to exclude any particular group or neighborhood. The CTP is developed for the entire community and the G&amp;O Survey should therefore be available to everybody who will be affected. The planning partners should determine the target audience cooperatively.</p> <p><i>How should the survey be distributed?</i> There are numerous methods that can be implemented to distribute the G&amp;O Survey within the planning area, including but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave copies at local governmental buildings and encourage citizens to pick up and complete the survey.</li> <li>• Give out copies to local organizations to hand out to their members. Include groups like churches, Masonic/Elks lodges, Rotary Clubs, homeowners associations, etc.</li> <li>• Include the survey as an insert in local publications such as newspapers, magazines, etc.</li> <li>• Insert the survey in local utility bills sent out by the City or Town.</li> <li>• Hand out surveys at public meetings throughout the course of the study.</li> <li>• Mail out copies of the survey to randomly selected residents within the planning area. Generally, the return rate for the G&amp;O Survey is low – between 5-10%. In order to obtain a fair representation of the planning area, be sure to send out enough copies of the survey. However, to avoid high reproduction costs, do not send out an extraneous number of surveys.</li> <li>• Post the survey on the Internet using an online survey tool such as <a href="#">Survey Monkey</a> or <a href="#">Zoomerang</a>. These tools usually charge a fee and an agreement on</li> </ul>

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	<p>who will bear this cost should have been determined as part of <a href="#">Step 2</a>.</p> <p>The planning partners should determine the appropriate method(s) of distribution that will help to encourage participation from the targeted survey respondents.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Administer the survey within the planning area and collect survey feedback.</b></p> <p>Once the G&amp;O Survey has been designed to the needed requirements, it should be administered within the planning area by the agreed upon method. Survey feedback, consisting of completed surveys, should be collected as needed during the administration of the survey.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Compile survey results.</b></p> <p>The G&amp;O Survey responses may be analyzed using methods appropriate to the types of questions included. The most common analysis technique for G&amp;O Surveys is descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis would include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining frequency or how many respondents chose each answer.</li> <li>• Determining what percentage of respondents chose each answer.</li> <li>• Describing or listing the answers to open-ended questions.</li> </ul> <p>The <a href="#">G&amp;O Study Report for the Topsail Area CTP</a> presents summaries of these types of analysis.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Document survey results.</b></p> <p>The G&amp;O Survey should be documented as a component of the public involvement process of the CTP Report or as a separate report. Regardless of the method used, the results documentation should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey methodology – how the survey was developed, what was included in the survey, how many surveys were distributed, how the survey was distributed, etc.</li> <li>• Survey results – how many responses were received and a summary of responses for each question. This may include lists, graphs, charts, etc.</li> <li>• Survey conclusions – what information regarding transportation values were determined as a result of the survey and how will this be incorporated into the CTP study.</li> <li>• Appendices – copy of the survey and any materials related to the survey, such as cover letters, postcards, advertisements, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> If the survey requests any personal information of the respondent, this information should not be included in any documentation that is publicly distributed.</p> <p>The <a href="#">G&amp;O Study Report for the Topsail Area CTP</a> is an example of a G&amp;O Survey report.</p>

## **Warnings and Precautions**

A wide distribution may lead to a very large number of completed surveys. This will take time and staff resources to evaluate, especially for open-ended questions.

## **Resources and Tools**

- FHWA's [Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making](#) (September 1996) includes information on public opinion surveys.
- [List](#) of available online survey tools.

- [Sample G&O Survey Questions](#)
- [Goals and Objective Survey Results for the Topsail Area CTP](#)

## **Contacts**

- For suggestions to change this procedure contact: Earlene Thomas (919) 733-4705 ext. 31
- For questions about performing this procedure contact: Terry C. Arellano (919) 715-5492 ext. 393

## **Glossary**

Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

Goals and Objectives (G&O)

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Rural Planning Organization (RPO)

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991

Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)

## **User Access**

NCDOT, FHWA, MPO, RPO, Consultants, etc.

## **Flowchart**

None