

# North Carolina Department of Transportation Customer Service Survey Results 2015

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of the customer survey research project was to objectively determine the perceptions and level of satisfaction of customers of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Assessing customer satisfaction will provide NCDOT useful feedback for a variety of subject areas including identifying performance improvement areas. This is the first such statewide survey and NCDOT is anticipating conducting it annually to track performance improvements.

A random, address-based sample of North Carolina residents was conducted in May and June 2015. The survey (184 questions total) took about 10-15 minutes to complete and could be filled out and submitted by mailing in a paper survey, online, or by oral response to an administrator on the phone. To take part in the survey, participants were required to be at least 18 years old and currently residing in North Carolina. NCSU/ITRE and the ETC Institute administered the survey. Concurrently to the random sample survey, an online survey was available to the public and to anyone who chose to complete it.

Random Sample Respondents: 2,430

Online Respondents: 3,832

### Random Sample Demographics:

- 54% Male; 46% Female
- 76% White; 13% Black; 6% prefer not to answer; 2% multi-racial; 1% Asian; 1% Native American; <1% Hispanic
- 22% were ages 18-44; 55% were ages 45-64; 23% were ages 65 or greater
- 11% reported household income <\$24,999; 29% reported household income >\$100,000
- 58% reported they have lived in North Carolina for more than 30 years
- 99% reported their primary means of transportation is a personal motor vehicle (1% bus)

Of the 2,430 respondents:

- **84% were overall satisfied with NCDOT services**
- 83% reported NCDOT services have improved over the last few years
- 91% reported they are familiar with DOT services
- 71% reported the NC transportation is one of the best compared to others states
- 63% visited a DMV office in the last 3 years (their top priority was wait time)
- 43% visited the DMV website in the past 12 months
  - 81% reported the website was easy to navigate and clearly explained services
- 99% drove or rode in a personal vehicle in the past year
  - The average miles traveled per day in a motor vehicle was 40
  - The top priority was smoothness of pavement
- 46% used a sidewalk, greenway or walkway in the past year (their top priority was access to sidewalks)
- 30% rode a bicycle in the past year (their top priority was access to bike lanes)
- 7% rode a public, local or city bus in the past year (their top priority was bus stop weather protection)
- 7% rode a passenger train in the past year (their top priority was frequency of trains)
- 19% rode a ferry at least once in the past year

## Background & Methodology

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) provides transportation services across North Carolina for all modes and users, including highways, ferries, public transportation, trains, planes, bicycles, pedestrians, and motor vehicle drivers and owners. It is responsible for the second largest state-maintained highway system in the United States, with nearly 15,000 miles of primary highways and 65,000 miles of secondary roads, and is responsible for the second largest state-maintained ferry system.

NCDOT has identified customer service as a strategic goal and customer satisfaction as a performance metric that is used to measure the success of customer service.

### **NCDOT Mission Statement**

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina.

### **NCDOT Strategic Goals:**

- Make transportation safer.
- Provide GREAT customer service.
- Deliver and maintain our infrastructure effectively and efficiently.
- Improve the reliability and connectivity of our transportation system.
- Promote economic growth through better use of our infrastructure.
- Make our organization a great place to work.

A random, address-based sample of North Carolina residents was contacted by mail or phone and invited to participate in a voluntary survey measuring personal perceptions of NCDOT's services. The survey took approximately 10-15 minutes and could be completed online, by mailing in a paper survey, or by oral response to an administrator on the phone. To take part in the survey, participants were required to be at least 18 years old and currently residing in North Carolina. ETC Institute administered the survey. The survey was conducted in May and June 2015.

The survey exclusively sampled those respondents that identified themselves as having been users of the specific transportation service within a recent period. For example, if a survey respondent stated that he or she had not used a passenger train within a certain period of time, that respondent was excluded from the passenger train section of the survey. The survey questions, 184 in total if answered completely, focused on seven core service areas, including motor vehicle travel, bicycle transportation, pedestrian travel, passenger rail service, public transit, ferry service, and the Division of Motor Vehicles. To reduce the length of the survey, program-specific questions and passenger air travel (aviation services) were excluded. Questions on ferry transportation were also abbreviated to reduce length and to not duplicate other outreach efforts.

To ensure that all counties and populations were represented in the survey, the sample included a minimum of 10 surveys per county, with additional surveys distributed in proportion to each county's population. The sample was randomly chosen to reasonably reflect the demographic composition of the state. This sampling resulted in a 95 percent confidence level at +/- 2 percent for the full statewide sample. Some values may not sum up to the total due to incremental rounding. Percentages of agreement included those who answered in agreement or were neutral. Respondents who answered "Don't know" were excluded from calculations.

For the purposes of this survey, when respondents stated every day, regularly, occasionally or rarely, the following definitions applied:

**Every Day:** Refers to residents who used a mode of transportation every day or almost every day in the past year.

**Regularly:** Refers to residents who used a mode of transportation more than once a week in the past year.

**Occasionally:** Refers to residents who used a mode of transportation a couple of times each month in the past year.

**Rarely:** Refers to residents who used a mode of transportation a couple of times in the past year.

## Demographics

Note: all results and statistics are based on the random address-based sample participants only.

Total Participants: 2,430

Male Participants: 54%

Female Participants: 46%

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| White                | 76% |
| Black                | 13% |
| Prefer not to answer | 6%  |
| Multi-Racial         | 2%  |
| Asian                | 1%  |
| Native American      | 1%  |
| Hispanic             | <1% |

### Annual Household Income

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| \$100,000 or more   | 29% |
| \$50,000 – \$99,999 | 38% |
| \$25,000 – 49,999   | 22% |
| Less than \$24,999  | 11% |

### Education Level

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Advanced degree (Masters/Professional/PhD)            | 20% |
| Bachelor's Degree                                     | 30% |
| Associate degree/trade/technical/vocational training  | 25% |
| High school graduate/diploma or equivalent (i.e. GED) | 24% |
| No schooling completed                                | 1%  |

### Years Lived in NC

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| 1-5 years          | 5%  |
| 6-10 years         | 8%  |
| 11-20 years        | 15% |
| 21-30 years        | 14% |
| More than 30 years | 58% |

### Primary Means of Transportation

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Personal Motor Vehicle Driver    | 95% |
| Personal Motor Vehicle Passenger | 4%  |
| Buses                            | 1%  |

### Participant Age

|       |     |
|-------|-----|
| 18-24 | 1%  |
| 25-34 | 6%  |
| 35-44 | 15% |
| 45-54 | 25% |
| 55-64 | 30% |
| 65+   | 23% |

## Overall Satisfaction Ratings of NCDOT

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 84% | of participants were overall satisfied with NCDOT Services |
|-----|--|

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 91% | of participants reported that they were familiar with NCDOT services   |
| 88% | of participants reported that it is easy to travel between North Carolina cities   |
| 83% | of participants reported that NCDOT services have improved in the last few years   |
| 78% | of participants reported that NCDOT is responsive to community needs   |
| 71% | of participants reported that the North Carolina transportation system is one of the best compared to others states                |
| 65% | of participants reported that NCDOT does a good job of prioritizing roadway improvements   |
| 89% | of participants said that they are able to get to their intended destinations in North Carolina safely and on time                 |
| 87% | of participants reported that NCDOT incorporates environmental concerns into the design and maintenance of transportation projects |
| 79% | of participants reported that North Carolina roadways are safer today than they were 5 years ago                                   |
| 74% | of participants reported that they feel well-informed about North Carolina safety campaigns  |
| 69% | of participants reported that they were adequately notified about NCDOT projects initiated in their area                           |
| 59% | of participants reported that roadways are repaired in a timely manner   |

### Has the congestion you face in your commute led you to make different choices?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 46% | Changed departure time   |
| 46% | Changed travel route   |
| 40% | No changes   |
| 2%  | Moved to different address   |
| 2%  | Started using or increased the frequency of using alternative transportation |
| 2%  | Changed workplace  |
| 2%  | Started carpooling or increased the times of carpooling                      |

### Which areas would you like NCDOT to focus on within the next few years?

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 83% | Maintenance of highways and interstates     |
| 68% | Safety of highways and interstates          |
| 52% | New construction of highway and interstates |
| 17% | Pedestrian services                         |
| 14% | Light rail services                         |
| 14% | Bus services                                |
| 14% | Bicycle services                            |
| 13% | Passenger train services                    |
| 3%  | Ferry services                              |

**What is the most effective way for NCDOT to provide you information?**

|      |                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| 100% | Signs on roadways                     |
| 88%  | Electronic message boards on highways |
| 65%  | Local TV                              |
| 54%  | Direct mailing/newsletters            |
| 43%  | Radio                                 |
| 36%  | Newspaper                             |
| 32%  | Flyers                                |
| 31%  | NCDOT website                         |
| 31%  | Email                                 |
| 22%  | Social media                          |
| 18%  | Text messages                         |
| 13%  | Public meetings/hearings              |
| 8%   | Public officials                      |

**Of the 437 participants (20% of total) who interacted with a NCDOT employee in the last two years:**

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 91% | reported that the NCDOT employee greeted them                                      |
| 91% | reported that the NCDOT employee treated them respectfully                         |
| 78% | reported that the NCDOT employee resolved their concern or answered their question |
| 76% | were satisfied with the customer service   |

**Of the 623 participants (26% of total) who visited the NCDOT website in the past year:**

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 85% | reported that the website clearly explained NCDOT services |
| 83% | reported that the website was easy to navigate             |
| 81% | reported that the website featured sufficient information  |

## Division of Motor Vehicles

### When was your last visit to a DMV License Office?

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Less than 6 months ago           | 29% |
| 6 months to less than 1 year ago | 14% |
| 1 year to less than 3 years ago  | 36% |
| 3 years to less than 5 years ago | 19% |
| 5 years ago or more              | 12% |

### Of the 1,532 participants who visited a DMV License Office within the last 3 years their annual household income is:

|     |                     |
|-----|---------------------|
| 29% | \$100,000 or more   |
| 38% | \$50,000 – \$99,999 |
| 23% | \$25,000 – \$49,999 |
| 10% | Less than \$24,999  |

### Of the 1,532 participants who visited a DMV License Office within the last 3 years, the service most utilized was:

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| License/permit/ID card          | 81% |
| Commercial driver license       | 5%  |
| Disability parking              | 5%  |
| Address change                  | 4%  |
| Motorcycle driver license       | 3%  |
| Other                           | 1%  |
| Paid liability insurance        | 1%  |
| Obtained copy of driving record | 1%  |

### Of the 1,044 participants who visited the DMV website in the past year:

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 81% | reported that the website was easy to navigate            |
| 81% | reported that the website clearly explained services      |
| 80% | reported that the website featured sufficient information |

### Of the 1,044 participants who visited the DMV website in the past year, the service most utilized was:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Renewed registration/plate                   | 91% |
| Other (general info, locations, hours, etc.) | 22% |
| Estimated vehicle property tax               | 12% |
| Ordered duplicate license/ID card            | 11% |
| Ordered personalized or specialized plate    | 3%  |
| Ordered duplicate registration card          | 3%  |
| Requested driving record                     | 3%  |
| Paid limited registration plate (LRP)        | 3%  |
| Liability insurance services                 | 2%  |

- 95% of DMV customers reported that the knowledge of DMV staff meets or exceeds expectations.
- 94% of DMV customers reported that the quality of printed materials meets or exceeds their expectations.

Top three most important DMV service areas:

1. Customer wait times
2. Hours of operation
3. Customer service

Top three DMV service areas meeting or exceeding expectations:

1. Cleanliness of facilities
2. Quality of printed materials
3. Knowledge of staff

## Motor Vehicle Drivers & Passengers (Highway Transportation)

### How often did you drive/ride in a personal vehicle in the past year?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| 86% | Everyday             |
| 11% | Regularly            |
| 2%  | Occasionally         |
| 1%  | Not in the past year |

### Out of the 2,402 respondents who drove or rode in a personal motor vehicle every day, regularly, or occasionally in the past year:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 72% | reported that the North Carolina transportation system is one of the best compared to other states     |
| 79% | reported that North Carolina roadways are safer today than they were 5 years ago                       |
| 63% | reported that they are able to get to their intended destinations in North Carolina safely and on time |

- 94% of motor vehicle drivers and passengers reported that the clarity of informational and warning signs along highways and interstates meets or exceeds their expectations.
- 89% of motor vehicle drivers and passengers reported that the safety of highways and interstates meets or exceeds their expectations.
- Of the 2,402 personal motor vehicle respondents, the average daily miles traveled in a motor vehicle is 40 miles.

### Top three most important highway transportation service areas:

1. Smoothness of pavement
2. Flow of traffic
3. Bridge maintenance

### Top three highway transportation service areas meeting or exceeding expectations:

1. Rest area or visitor center cleanliness
2. Sign clarity
3. Guardrail maintenance

## Pedestrians

### How often did you walk, jog, or run for more than five minutes in the past year?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| 9%  | Everyday             |
| 17% | Regularly            |
| 21% | Occasionally         |
| 14% | Rarely               |
| 39% | Not in the past year |

### Out of the 1,122 respondents who walked, jogged, or ran on a sidewalk, greenway, or walkway for five minutes or more every day, regularly, occasionally, or rarely in the past year:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 70% | reported that the North Carolina transportation system is one of the best compared to other states     |
| 77% | reported that North Carolina roadways are safer today than they were 5 years ago                       |
| 88% | reported that they are able to get to their intended destinations in North Carolina safely and on time |

### Purpose of the pedestrian trip:

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 50% | Exercise                       |
| 23% | Recreation                     |
| 11% | Shopping                       |
| 8%  | Visiting friends and/or family |
| 5%  | Work                           |
| 3%  | Other                          |

- 80% of pedestrian respondents reported that the length of time to cross at crosswalks or intersections meets or exceeds their expectations.
- 79% of pedestrian respondents reported that the visibility of pedestrian signals meets or exceeds their expectations.
- Of the 1,122 pedestrian respondents, the average pedestrian trip is 3 miles.
- The 1,122 pedestrian respondents reported that access and safety of walkways and sidewalks should receive the most emphasis from NCDOT in the next few years.

### Top three most important pedestrian service areas:

1. Access to sidewalks
2. Safety of pedestrian walkways
3. Accommodation of vulnerable pedestrians

### Top three pedestrian service areas meeting or exceeding expectations:

1. Length of time to cross at crosswalks
2. Visibility of pedestrian signals
3. Visibility of pedestrian signage

## Bicyclists

### How often did you ride a bicycle in the past year?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| 1%  | Everyday             |
| 4%  | Regularly            |
| 9%  | Occasionally         |
| 16% | Rarely               |
| 70% | Not in the past year |

### Out of the 726 respondents who rode their bicycles every day, regularly, occasionally, or rarely in the past year:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 67% | reported that the North Carolina transportation system is one of the best compared to other states     |
| 74% | reported that North Carolina roadways are safer today than they were 5 years ago                       |
| 87% | reported that they are able to get to their intended destinations in North Carolina safely and on time |

### Purpose of bicycle ride:

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 46% | Exercise                       |
| 40% | Recreation                     |
| 6%  | Visiting friends and/or family |
| 4%  | Shopping                       |
| 3%  | Work                           |
| 2%  | other                          |

- 46% of the bicycle respondents reported that the visibility & lighting along bicycle facilities and greenways meets or exceeds their expectations.
- 49% of the bicycle respondents reported that their access to greenways meets or exceeds their expectations.
- Of the 726 bicycle respondents, the average bicycle trip is 9 miles.
- The 726 bicycle respondents reported that access to bike lanes, wide shoulders, and bicycle-friendly shared lanes should receive the most emphasis from NCDOT in the next few years.

### Top three most important bicycle services:

1. Access to bike lanes
2. Location of bike facilities
3. Connectivity

### Top three bicycle services meeting or exceeding expectations:

1. Debris removal
2. Access to greenways
3. Greenway lighting

## Bus Passengers

(Note: For the purposes of this survey, “bus” refers to public, local, and city buses in North Carolina.)

### How often did you ride a bus in the past year?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| 1%  | Everyday             |
| 1%  | Regularly            |
| 2%  | Occasionally         |
| 4%  | Rarely               |
| 92% | Not in the past year |

### Out of the 160 respondents who rode a bus every day, regularly, occasionally, or rarely in the past year:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 61% | reported that the North Carolina transportation system is one of the best compared to other states     |
| 74% | reported that North Carolina roadways are safer today than they were 5 years ago                       |
| 87% | reported that they are able to get to their intended destinations in North Carolina safely and on time |

### Purpose of bus trip:

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 31% | Work                           |
| 28% | Recreation                     |
| 19% | Shopping                       |
| 13% | Visiting friends and/or family |
| 6%  | Medical                        |
| 1%  | School                         |
| 1%  | Other                          |

- 86% of bus passengers reported that the cost of riding the bus meets or exceeds their expectations.
- 78% of bus passengers reported that the reliability of buses meets or exceeds expectations.
- Of the 160 bus passenger respondents, the average bus trip is 16 miles.
- The 160 bus passenger respondents reported that bus stop weather protection should receive the most emphasis from NCDOT in the next few years.

### Top three most important bus services:

1. Bus stop weather protection
2. Access to buses
3. Reliability of buses

### Top three bus services meeting or exceeding expectations:

1. Bus temperature
2. Ease of boarding
3. Seat availability

## Train Passengers

(Note: For the purposes of this survey, "train" refers to Amtrak passenger trains in North Carolina. Light rail services were not included in this survey.)

### How often did you ride a passenger train in the past year?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| 1%  | Occasionally         |
| 6%  | Rarely               |
| 93% | Not in the past year |

### Out of the 164 respondents who rode a passenger train in the past year:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 63% | reported that the North Carolina transportation system is one of the best compared to other states     |
| 78% | reported that North Carolina roadways are safer today than they were 5 years ago                       |
| 92% | reported that they are able to get to their intended destinations in North Carolina safely and on time |

### Purpose of train ride:

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 56% | Visiting friends and/or family |
| 30% | Recreation                     |
| 10% | Work                           |
| 2%  | Shopping                       |
| 2%  | Other                          |

- 90% of train passengers reported that the courtesy and helpfulness of train staff and volunteers meets or exceeds their expectations.
- 93% of train passengers reported that the safety and security on trains meets or exceeds their expectations.
- The 164 train passenger respondents reported that access to and frequency of passenger trains should receive the most emphasis from NCDOT in the next few years.

### Top three most important passenger train services:

1. Frequency of trains
2. Access to trains
3. Reliability

### Top three passenger train services meeting or exceeding expectations:

1. Seating availability
2. Train security
3. Checked baggage handling

## Ferry Passengers

(Note: For the purposes of this survey, "ferry" refers to the seven NCDOT maintained and operated ferry routes in North Carolina.)

### How often did you ride a ferry in the past year?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| 1%  | Everyday             |
| 1%  | Regularly            |
| 1%  | Occasionally         |
| 17% | Rarely               |
| 80% | Not in the past year |

### Out of the 452 respondents who rode a ferry every day, regularly, occasionally, or rarely in the past year:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 75% | reported that the North Carolina transportation system is one of the best compared to other states     |
| 77% | reported that North Carolina roadways are safer today than they were 5 years ago                       |
| 89% | reported that they are able to get to their intended destinations in North Carolina safely and on time |

### Which ferry route do you use most often in North Carolina?

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 8%  | Swan Quarter/Ocracoke Island   |
| 6%  | Bayview/Aurora                 |
| 15% | Cedar Island/Ocracoke Island   |
| 15% | Cherry Branch/Minnesott Branch |
| 3%  | Currituck/Knotts Island        |
| 22% | Hatteras/Ocracoke Island       |
| 30% | Southport/Fort Fisher          |

*Note: Participant priorities and expectation levels of ferry services not included in this survey.*