



Community Workshops Summary Report

Collin County Mobility Plan – 2013 Update

Prepared for Collin County

Collin County, Texas
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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A more extensive public participation process was included in this Mobility Plan update than in past efforts. Any interested individual or stakeholder could provide comments through a variety of means.

Participants are concerned about congestion because it takes time that could otherwise be spent with family and friends. The worst traffic congestion, according to participants, is on U.S. 75. A significant share of participants do not believe that the current mix of travel choices provides them what they need; they want more extensive public transportation services and better bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



Community Workshop in Plano, TX

While participants continue to place the highest emphasis on improvements that reduce peak hour congestion, other issues are also very important to them. Supporting the vitality of existing communities is the second-most important benefit they want to see from mobility investments, and providing transportation facilities and choices for businesses is the third-most important benefit. As this process continues, it will evaluate transportation improvements in terms of these benefits as well as the more-traditional analysis of traffic volumes and congestion.

As these new transportation facilities are built, their design should be compatible with the areas and uses around them; they should provide safety to all users; and they should be designed in a way that minimizes life-cycle costs, not just initial construction cost.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Collin County is in the process of updating the Mobility Plan. About every five years, the county reviews the changing transportation needs of residents and businesses. The update started in 2012 and it will take more than a year to identify and coordinate transportation needs of the growing population, and serve as a guide for future investments in transportation facilities and services in Collin County.

This process has four stages:

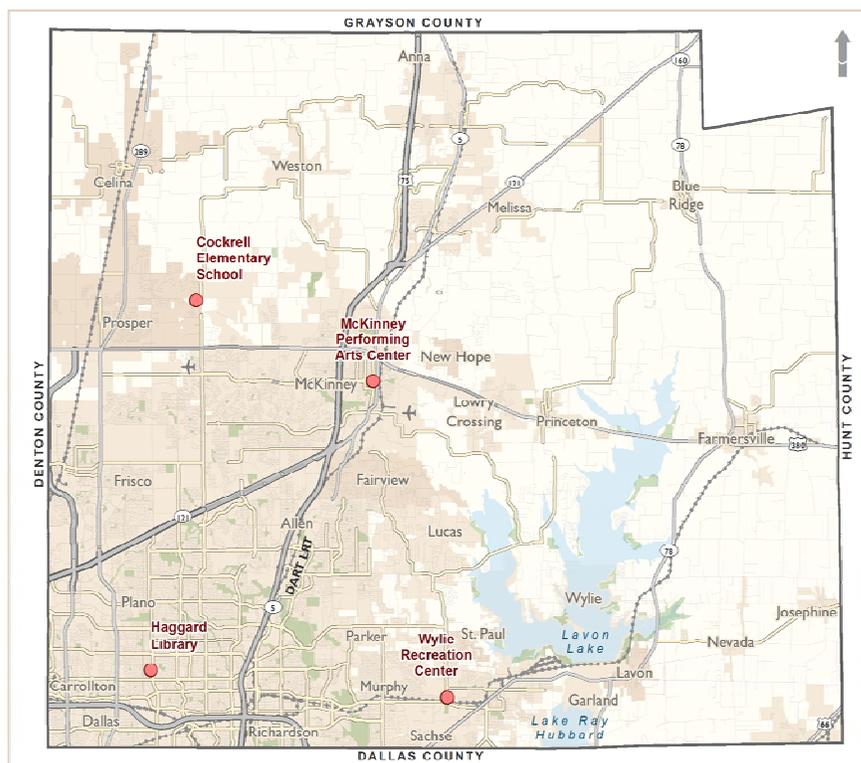
- Review the results of the county's 2007 Mobility Update;
- Analyze the county's current and projected population and employment growth;
- Identify specific multi-modal transportation improvements that will serve the needs of county residents, both short- and long-term; and

- Determine which improvements can be funded within the bounds of current and projected financial resources available to the county.

This update is a team effort involving the Collin County Commissioners Court, Planning Board, and Engineering Department; 31 local governments; DART; the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT); the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Comments and recommendations are also welcome from anyone who uses Collin County's roads, bridges, transit, bike paths and walkways, or whose investment choices are affected by mobility in the county.

Collin County conducted a public outreach effort in early 2013 so interested individuals and organizations could provide input using the communications approach they preferred.

As part of that outreach effort, four community workshops were held in February 2013 to help define goals and objectives for transportation planning and provide an opportunity for interested parties to review the most recent demographic and land use forecasts. Workshops were held in Plano (Haggard Library), Wylie (Wylie Recreation Center), Prosper (Cockrell Elementary School) and McKinney (McKinney Performing Arts Center) from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.



Community Workshop Locations within Collin County

In addition to the workshops, interested individuals were able to provide comments by mail and email; an online survey provided another way for people to contribute their ideas for consideration during this process.

2.1. Workshop Purpose and Overview

The purpose of these workshops was to provide opportunities for Collin County stakeholders to share their ideas about the County's mobility system and needs. The workshops were designed to:

- Present information about Collin County's growth, its past mobility plans and its current transportation characteristics;

- Give participants an opportunity to ask questions about this information;
- Engage participants in discussion with one another; and
- Gain input from participants about all mobility issues using a variety of techniques.

2.2. Outreach Methods

To ensure a wider audience was informed of the meeting, phone calls were made and emails (with workshop flyer attached) were sent to 40 cities, municipal utility districts, and special utility districts within Collin County. In addition, emails were sent to community organizations active in Collin County including: the Richardson Historical Society, Arts Center of North Texas (formerly Arts of Collin County), Bike Friendly Richardson, Bike DFW, Collin County Community College District, Collin County Historical Commission, Connemara Conservancy, Dallas Chinese News, Dallas Off Road Bicycle Association, DART, Denton County Transportation Authority, Fort Worth Transportation Authority, Greater Dallas Planning Council, North Texas Commission, North Texas Tollway Authority, North Texas Council of Governments, Plano Bicycle Association, Richardson Chamber of Commerce, Richardson ISD and Texas Trails Network. All emails and phone calls encouraged these organizations to distribute the workshop announcement through their own communication networks.

Announcements were made on the Collin County Facebook (www.facebook.com/CollinGovt) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/collincountygov>) pages and on the Collin County home page located at www.co.collin.tx.us/.

Collin County managed the pre-, during and post-event media relations for the Community Workshops. A press release and request for media coverage was sent to 80 media outlets



Workshop Flyer



Facebook and Twitter Announcements



Community Workshop in Wylie, TX

including weekly newspapers, social publications, Associated Press, television, and AM/FM radio, state representatives and local representatives on February 13, 2013.

Detailed information on the methods of meeting advertisement is included in **Appendix A**.

2.3. Attendance

There were a combined total of 78 people who signed in for the Community Workshops. **Exhibit 1** below separates the attendance by workshop location. The sign-in sheets are located in **Appendix B**.

Workshop	Attendance
February 19, 2013 - Plano	19
February 20, 2013 - Wylie	21
February 25, 2013 - Prosper	12
February 26, 2013 - McKinney	26
Total	78

Exhibit 1: Workshop Attendance



**Community Workshop in McKinney, TX
Collin County Commissioner Matt Shaheen**

3.0 WORKSHOP FORMAT

The same agenda was used for each of the four workshops. The workshops began with a welcome from a County Commissioner or leader in the community where the workshop was held. A presentation by the Jacobs consultant team provided background information on the Mobility Plan, the update process, transportation issues and projected population and employment growth in the county. The handouts, exhibits and slide presentation are located in **Appendix C**. Workshop photos can be found in **Appendix E**.



**Community Workshop in Wylie, TX
Collin County Commissioner Cheryl Williams**

After the presentation, participants met in small groups to consider questions about their desired mobility improvements. The questions were:

- Based on your group members' experience, where are the top five biggest congestion problems in Collin County today?
- What three mobility improvements would do the most to improve your



Community Workshop in Prosper, TX

day-to-day quality of life? Mobility improvements might include changes to freeways, arterial streets, local roads, public transportation, sidewalks, bikeways or the operation of these facilities.

- What three mobility improvements would do the most to support the economy of Collin County?
- What three mobility improvements would encourage the pattern of growth and development that you'd like to see in Collin County over the next 20 to 25 years?

Each group was asked to reach agreement on its response to these questions. In the third segment of the workshop, all groups shared their work with one another. Discussion about these results identified common themes and priorities. These were captured on flip charts which are located in **Appendix D**.



Community Workshop in Plano, TX

Finally, electronic keypads were used to obtain anonymous input from all workshop participants. A series of questions was displayed on a large screen in the front of the meeting room. Each participant, equipped with a handheld wireless keypad, responded to these questions based on his or her own knowledge and opinions. Responses were automatically and instantly tallied and the results were displayed on the screen. The instant results of the keypad polling provided immediate feedback to participants about the opinions of the entire group.



Electronic Keypad

The keypad polling technique encourages greater participation and more effective communication because everyone is heard equally. The voting is anonymous, which allows the participants to

respond based on their individual

preferences, which might vary from the overall consensus recorded during the small group discussions. Also, the anonymity allows participants to voice their true opinions without the influence of the other participants.

After the keypad polling, a County representative wrapped up the meeting by thanking participants for their comments and suggestions. Participants were encouraged to continue their involvement by taking the

Comment Card
Collin County Mobility Plan - 2013 Update
Date of Comment: _____

Your comments will help shape a Mobility Plan that meets the needs of people in Collin County. Please use this form to provide comments, suggestions and concerns about mobility in the County today and in the future.

Please provide your contact information if you'd like to receive information about the Mobility Plan Update as the project continues.

Name: _____

Company/Organization (if any): _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

All written comments must be received or postmarked by Tuesday, March 28, 2013, to be part of the official record for the initial phase of public involvement and to be considered by the Mobility Plan Team. Written comments can be e-mailed to mobility@collincounty.gov, submitted through the website at www.collincounty.gov/transportation/mobility, or mailed to Mobility Plan Team, c/o Collin County - Engineering Department, 835 N. McDonald Street, Suite 160, McKinney, TX 75069.

Collin County Mobility Plan 2013 UPDATE For more information, please visit www.collincounty.gov/transportation/mobility

Comment Card

online survey and attending later meetings. They were asked to invite friends, neighbors and colleagues to participate as well.

Two other options for input were available to workshop participants. A written comment form was available for anyone who wanted to provide a more detailed comment or a suggestion about a specific road, intersection or mobility concern. Also, County staff and consultant team members spent time before and after each workshop talking to individual participants about their questions, concerns and suggestions.

4.0 ONLINE INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

As described previously, any interested person was able to provide comments electronically about the Mobility Plan update. Nearly 50 people provided comments through the online survey and another 10 sent email comments.

Exhibit 2 shows that more than half of the people who provided comments through the online survey had not participated in a community workshop. This shows that the online participants were a different set of interested stakeholders than workshop participants.

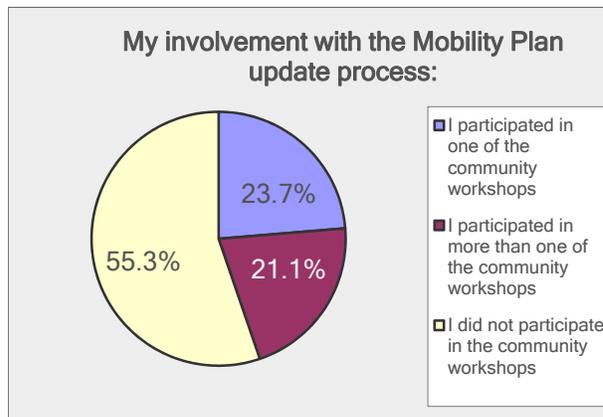


Exhibit 2: Online Participants' Other Involvement In Update Process

While information on the Mobility Plan update was circulated through the Collin County Facebook and Twitter accounts, no substantive comments were received through these means.

5.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Anyone who participates in the public involvement activities for a planning project chooses to do so. This self-selection means that the person is interested in the issues addressed by the project (mobility, in this case), cares about the future of the community that is the project focus (Collin County, for this project) or has a particular interest or stake in the project's outcome. Since participants choose to be involved for these reasons, they are unlikely to reflect the balance of perspectives and opinions held by a random selection of community residents. Their input should not be viewed as a statistically-



Community Workshop in McKinney, TX

representative sample of resident opinions. Rather, it should be understood as the input of people who are more interested and involved – and usually better informed – about the choices facing Collin County in terms of its future mobility. This more knowledgeable perspective is important for the consultant team and the County to understand because it reflects on-the-ground experience with the transportation system. Also, these concerns are the ones that are most likely to be heard at the public hearings when decisions are made at the end of this process, so it’s valuable to understand and address these concerns during the analysis phase of work.

At each workshop, a few keypad polling questions asked participants about their backgrounds. These questions were also included in the online survey. Answers to these questions help us to understand the perspectives and backgrounds of the people who chose to be involved in this process. As expected, participants do not provide a representative sample of all County residents. Rather, they reflect the perspectives of informed and active community stakeholders and leaders.

Key characteristics of participants are described below.

5.1. Age of Participants

All participants were between the ages of 21 and 79. As **Exhibit 3** shows, workshop participants were evenly divided between those in their 40s and 50s and those in their 60s and 70s. Two-thirds of the online participants were in their 40s and 50s.

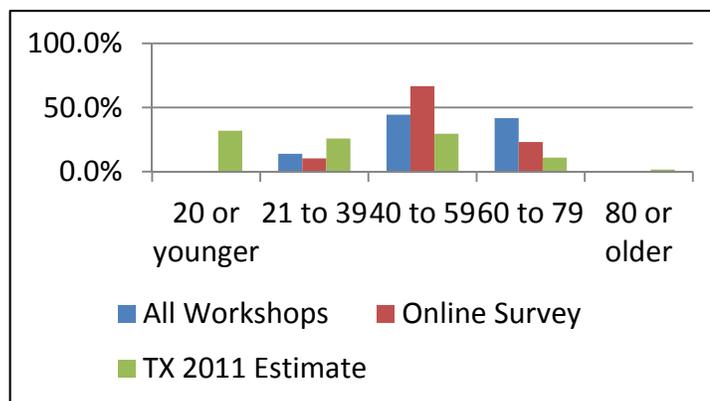


Exhibit 3: Age of Participants

Public participation for a project such as a Mobility Plan update seldom includes children, so it is not surprising that there are none included here. **Exhibit 3** also shows that a smaller share of participants in the workshops and online surveys were between 21 and 39 than the share in the Collin County population as a whole¹. A larger share of participants was between 40 and 79 than this age group’s share in the population as a whole.

5.2. Tenure in Collin County (Home and Work)

Most participants are long-term residents of Collin County. **Exhibit 4** shows the length of residency in Collin County for participants at each workshop, then for all workshop participants, and finally for online participants.

¹ The ‘TX 2011 estimate’ is the Texas State Demographer’s estimate of the demographic characteristics of Collin County residents in 2011.

Just over 40% of workshop participants and almost half (48%) of online participants have lived in Collin County for more than twenty years. A small percentage of participants (8.4% of workshop participants and 10.3% of online participants) have lived here for five or fewer years. Therefore, the input from these workshops reflects the perspective of people who made their initial choice to locate in Collin County many years ago and have chosen to remain here. Their views may be different from the perspectives of people who have chosen a Collin County location more recently.

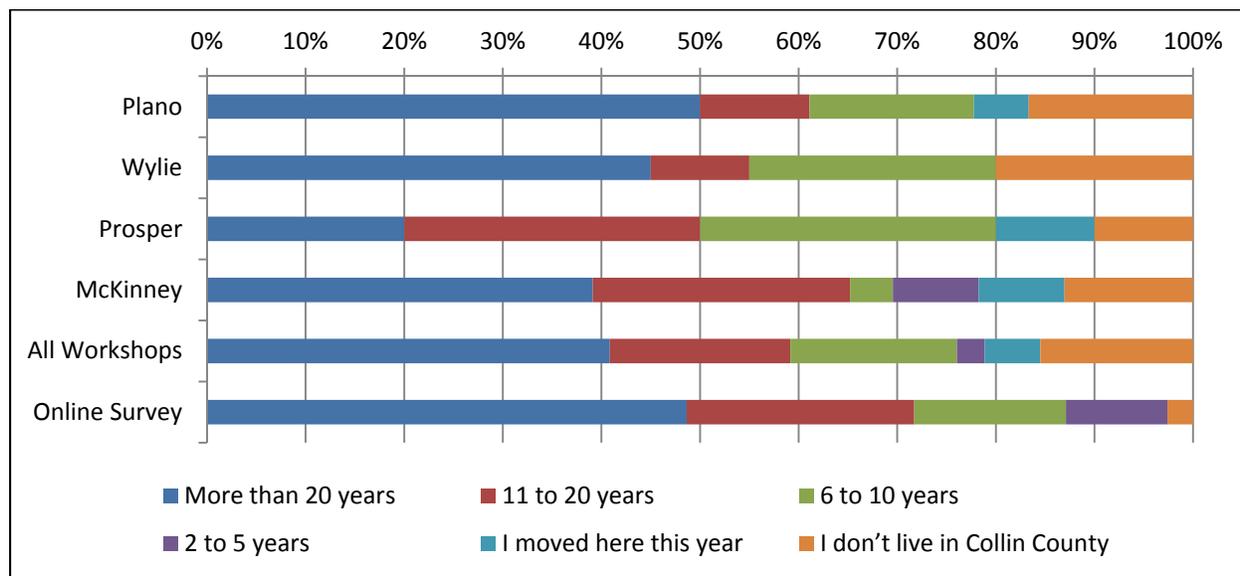
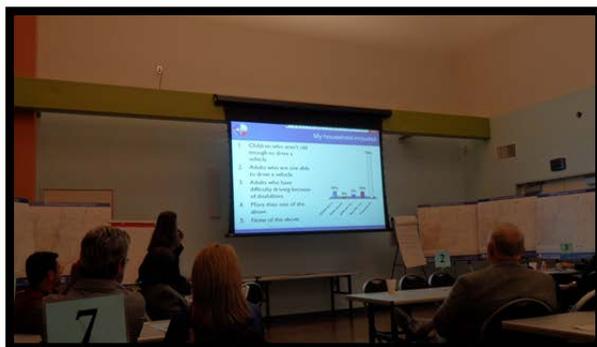


Exhibit 4: Length of Residence in Collin County

Approximately 15% of workshop participants did not live in Collin County; presumably they attended because of their business locations or work responsibilities.

Exhibit 5 shows that participants in this Mobility Plan Update have worked in Collin County for a shorter length of time than their time of residence here. Only 16.2% of workshop participants have worked here for over 20 years. Not surprisingly, given the length of Collin County residence reported in **Exhibit 4**, a substantial share of workshop participants (22.1%) are retired, students or otherwise not in the work force. Online participants include a smaller share of people who are not in the work force (5.3%), more people who have worked here for over 20 years (21.1%) and a larger share of people who work outside Collin County (31.6%).

Community Workshop in Wylie, TX



Community Workshop in Wylie, TX



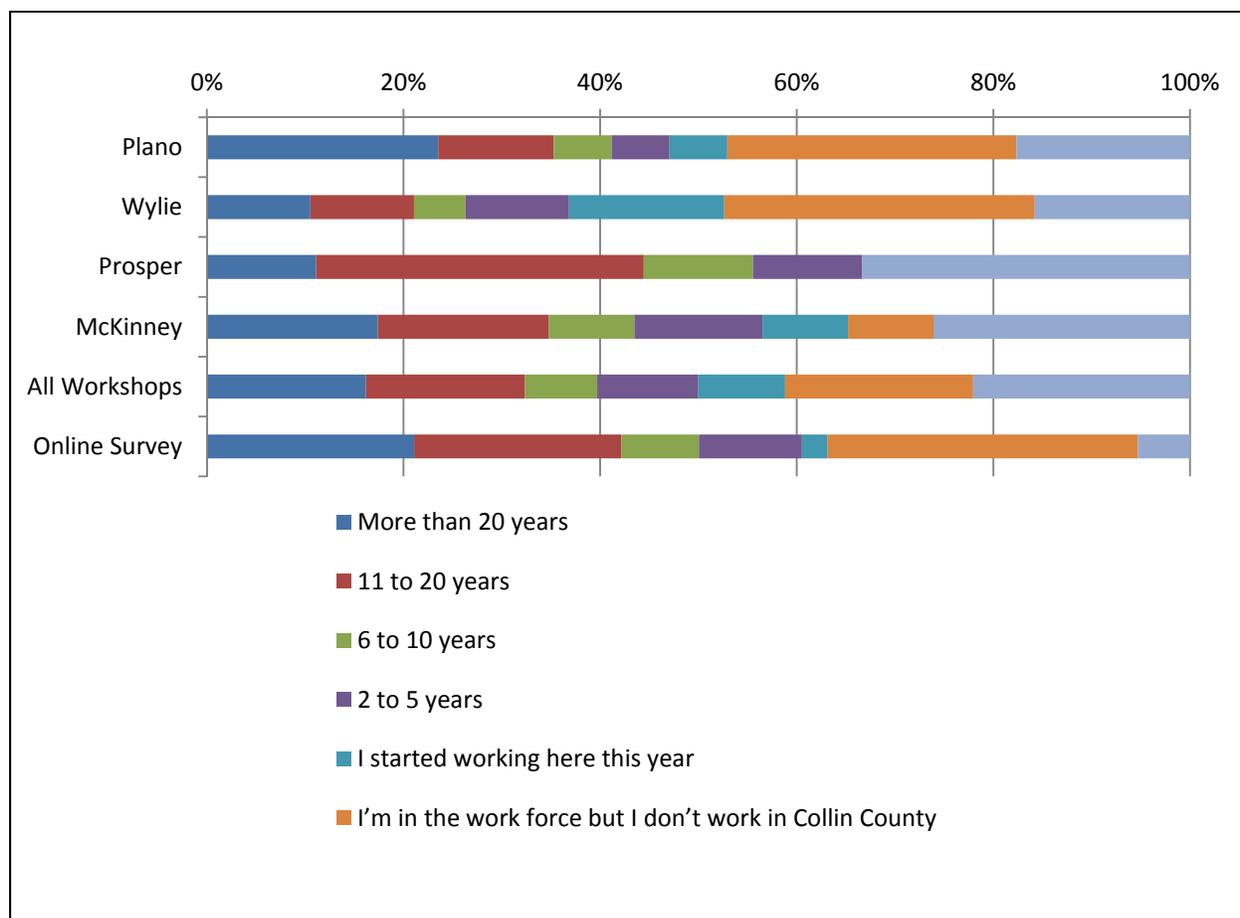


Exhibit 5: Status of Work in Collin County

5.3. Participants' Household Characteristics

Keypad and online survey questions also asked participants for information about a few household characteristics that affect demands on the mobility system. **Exhibit 6** presents information about the characteristics of people in participants' households. By far the largest share of workshop participants (58.3%) are people who live only with a spouse or partner. For online participants, the share of people who live only with a spouse or partner is equal to the share whose households include both children and other adults (39.5%). People who live just with a spouse or partner (therefore, a household with 2 adults and no children) are much more highly represented by these participants than their share in the overall Collin County population. According to the ACS 2007-2011 estimates, such households were 27.2% of the households in Collin County during that five year period². The online survey participants are similar to the ACS estimates in terms of the share of households with both adults and children; the ACS estimates that 34.7% of Collin County households during the 2007-2011 period were households including the adult's own children under the age of 18. Mobility plan

² The ACS is the American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data are estimates developed based on sample surveys over the period from 2007 to 2011.

participants under-represent single person households and single parent households compared to the ACS estimates.

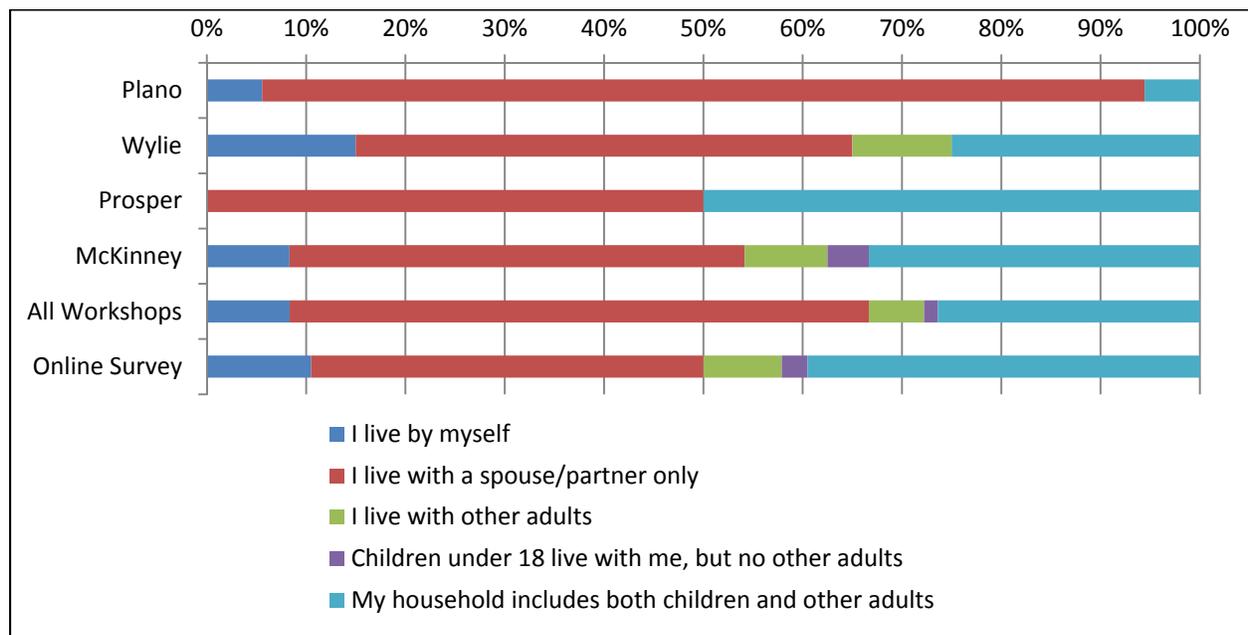


Exhibit 6: Participants' Household Characteristics

For most participants, all members of their household can drive. For workshop participants, 73.6% of respondents said they did not have household members who could not drive; 67.6% of online participants said the same³. Almost a third (29.7%) of online participants had children in their households who were too young to drive.

Not surprisingly, all participant households had at least one vehicle (car or truck). **Exhibit 7** shows that most households had two vehicles, while 43% of households had three or more vehicles.

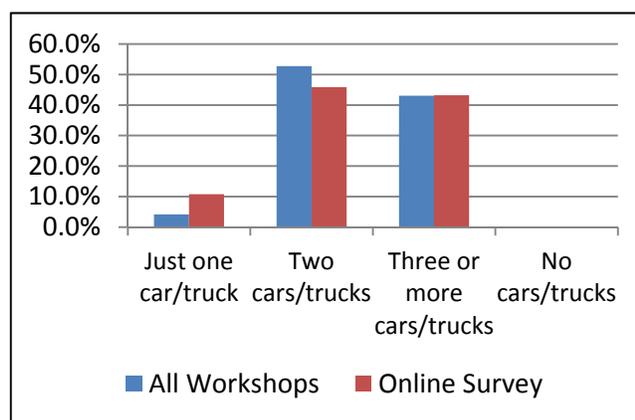


Exhibit 7: Car Ownership

³ The questions asked whether the participant's household included 'children who aren't old enough to drive a vehicle', 'adults who are not able to drive a vehicle', 'adults who have difficulty driving because of disabilities', 'more than one of the above' or 'none of the above'. The responses reported here are 'none of the above'.

6.0 PUBLIC INPUT HIGHLIGHTS

The discussion below summarizes the highlights of input obtained from the community through all the methods described above. Detailed information on these responses, as well as the individual written comments received through comment forms and email, are found in the **Appendix F** and **Appendix G** of this report.

6.1. Current Transportation Conditions

The input received through this public outreach process provides insight into perspectives about the existing transportation system. According to participants, the biggest problems caused by congestion are ‘I spend time stuck in traffic instead of with family and friends’ and ‘It wastes gas and money.’ **Exhibit 8** shows these responses for each workshop, for all workshops combined and for online participants. Mobility strategies and investments that save time, gas and money appear to have higher value to participants than strategies that simply shorten the work commute.

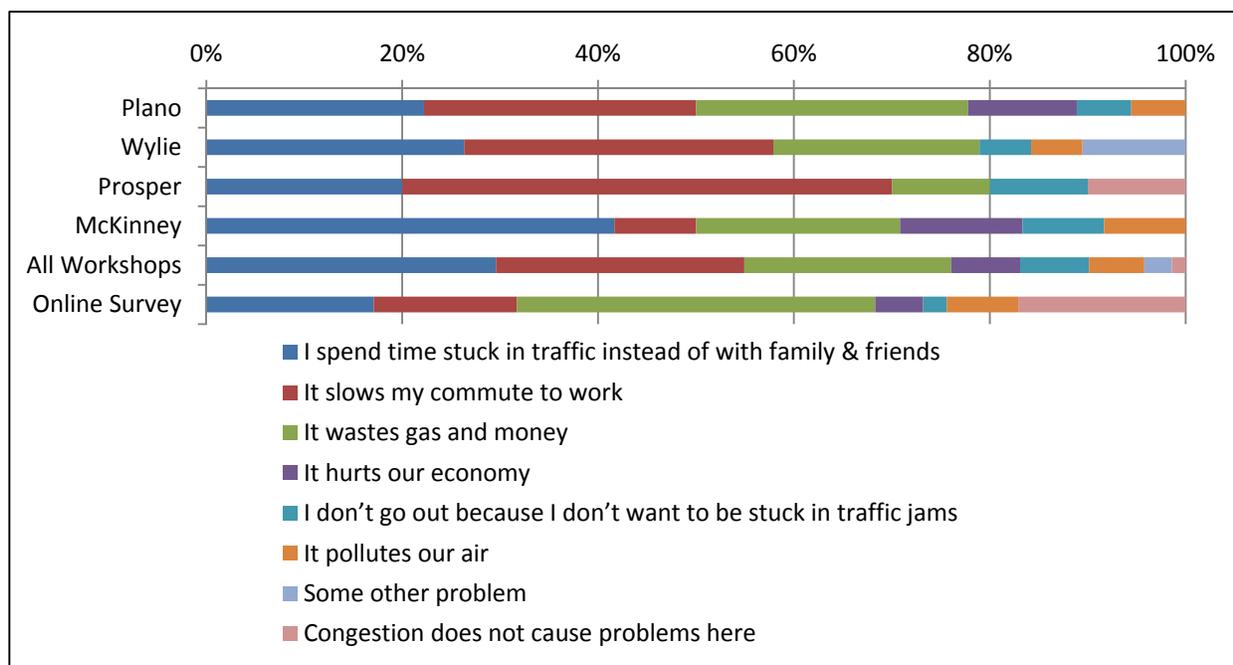


Exhibit 8: Biggest Problems from Congestion

The worst traffic congestion by far, in the view of all participants, in the congestion on U.S. 75 – 72.9% of workshop participants and 65.1% of online participants felt this way. Congestion in the developed southern and western parts of the county or congestion on routes between these developed communities and outlying destination were the biggest congestion concerns for about 15% of both workshop and online participants. 14% of online participants felt that the biggest congestion problem was in the rural northern and eastern parts of the County. **Exhibit 9** presents these results.

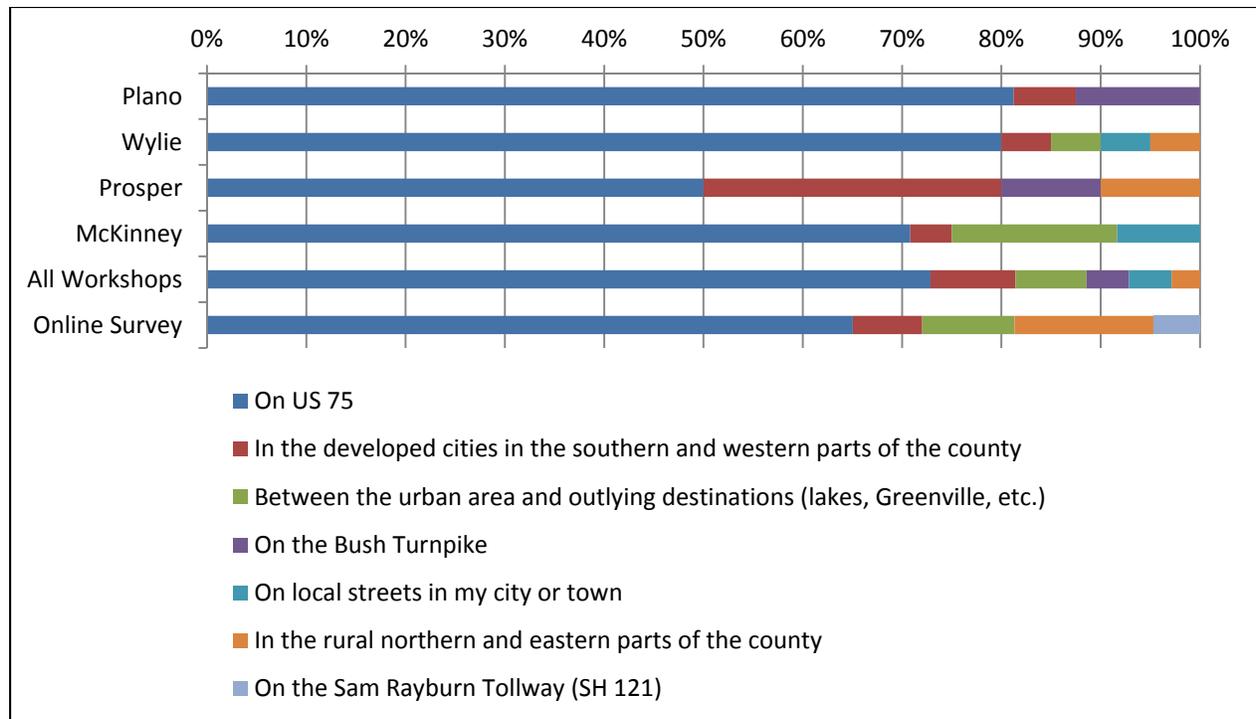


Exhibit 9: Worst Congestion

Finally, many participants are interested in having a wider range of travel options than currently exist. **Exhibit 10** shows that significant percentages of respondents were interested in one or more of the additional options that could increase the range of mobility choice in Collin County. 45.1% of workshop participants and 17.1% of online participants say they would like more than one of these additional options.

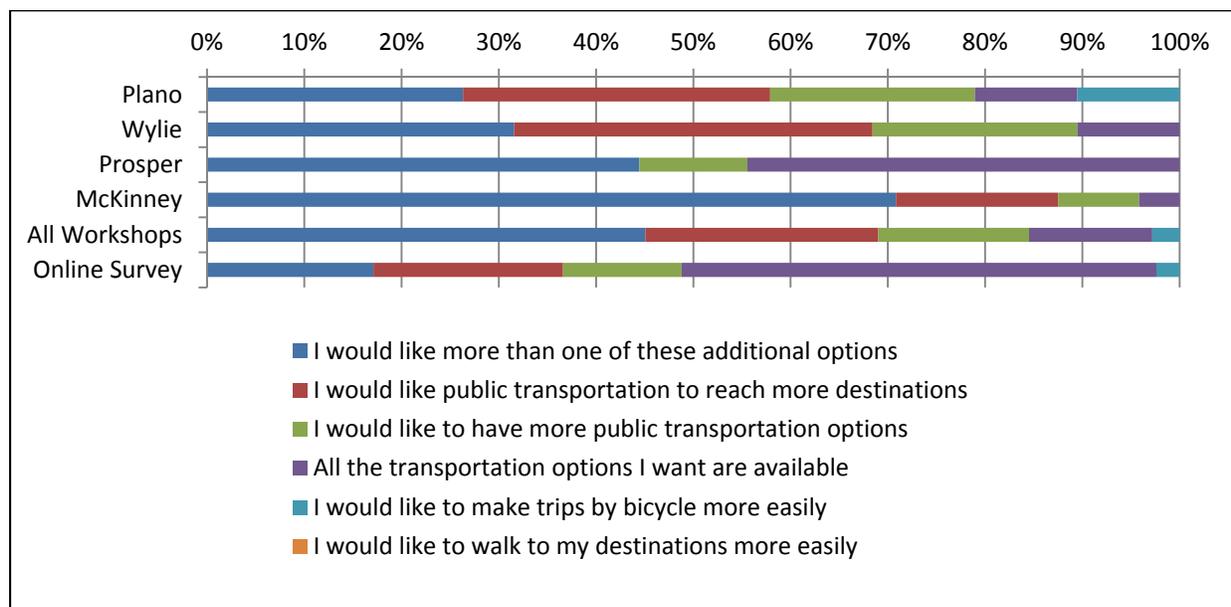


Exhibit 10: Mix of Travel Options

Online participants are more satisfied with the current range of choices, with almost half (48.8%) saying that all the transportation options they want are available. Only 12.7% of workshop participants feel this way.

6.2. Desired Mobility Improvements

The small groups at each workshop responded to a set of questions about mobility improvements that would do the most to improve three key aspects of Collin County in the future – its day-to-day quality of life, its economy and its pattern of development.

The responses from all workshop groups are found in this report's appendices, as are the comments provided online. Some of the preferred improvements for each of these areas are shown in **Exhibits 11, 12 and 13**.

While some of the improvements identified by participants are the more traditional major capital projects that increase roadway capacity, it is notable that many of these ideas take other approaches to improving mobility. Many comments support an expansion of DART and/or other public transportation options. Participants also supported efforts to develop in a way that makes it easy for people to use transit. They recognize that transit-oriented development – having a compact development pattern with many residents and jobs in walking or biking distance of transit stations – will result in the

- DART
- Bike lanes
- Shoulders on all roads
- HOV lanes w/ cameras
- Outer Loop
- Specific changes on 380
- Wider roads w/turn lanes for school buses
- Cotton Belt passenger rail
- Overpasses
- Electronic devices
- Eliminate gating
- Motorcycle lanes
- Extension of DNT
- Improve E-W options
- Roads built for 30 year life
- Countywide bus system

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Exhibit 11: Quality of Life Improvements

- Transportation Demand Management
- Relieve 75 congestion by increasing DART capacity
- Intelligent Trans. Systems
- Improve major routes
- Transit-oriented development
- Use traffic volumes to drive investment
- DNT extension
- Mass transportation
- Cotton belt (bus or train)
- Parking
- Regional airport
- Redevelop existing infrastructure
- Outer Loop (E-W)
- Clean up downtown Prosper
- Bike routes, car & van pool
- Widen I21

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Exhibit 12: Economic Improvements

- Outer Loop
- More E-W roads
- Countywide bus system
- More green space
- Cross [Lake] Lavon
- Transit alternatives
- DART paralleling DNT
- Expand road & rail E. of Lavon
- N-S thoroughfares
- More attractive roadways, w/ trees, amenities
- Improve mass transit
- Parks, bike trails, quality of life
- Model for live-work-play
- Cotton Belt

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Exhibit 13: Improvements for Desired Development

best return on public investments in transit.

Also notable are the suggestions related to the use of technology. These ideas include intelligent transportation systems, transportation system management, transportation demand management, and the use of electronic devices (such as smart phones) to help people plan routes that avoid accidents and congestion. These technologies allow Collin County to use existing transportation infrastructure more efficiently. They save time because drivers are not caught in congestion at peak hours or in unexpected traffic jams due to accidents, construction or roadway maintenance.

Many participants were interested in having better and safer routes for walking and biking to destinations that are close to home or work. These interests suggest that Collin County may be able to improve mobility by making bike and pedestrian improvements that allows people the choice of making trips without driving cars.

Finally, a number of recommended improvements relate to a specific segment of road or a certain intersection. These comments are quite useful to the consultant team, because they reflect actual user experience with these particular locations. This experience can be used to double-check results from the team's computer modeling and other analysis. It may be possible to address these bottlenecks with operational changes to turning lanes, signalization and other lower-cost improvements to the existing system.

All of these ideas will be examined as part of the Consultant Team's analysis of alternative transportation investments for Collin County.

6.3. Benefits From Investments

Participants were asked about the importance of a variety of possible benefits that mobility improvements could provide. **Exhibit 14** summarizes those responses. In this chart, the potential benefits are listed in the order of perceived value. Reducing congestion during peak travel periods was considered 'very important' or 'somewhat important' by almost all workshop participants (94.3%) and by most online participants (81.0%). The second most-valued benefit of mobility improvements was 'supporting the vitality of existing cities and neighborhoods'. Providing transportation systems and choices for businesses was the third-most valued. These three were considered 'very important' or 'somewhat important' by a majority of online participants and by over 90% of workshop participants.

Potential Mobility Benefit	All Workshops		Online	
	Very/ Somewhat important	Not very important / Very unimportant	Very/ Somewhat important	Not very important / Very unimportant
Reducing congestion during peak travel periods	94.3%	2.9%	81.0%	14.3%
Supporting the vitality of existing cities and neighborhoods	91.7%	1.4%	64.3%	9.5%
Providing the transportation system and choices businesses need to succeed	91.5%	1.4%	50.0%	14.3%
Reducing long-term costs to operate & maintain transportation facilities	87.1%	2.9%	42.9%	28.6%
Reducing air quality and other environmental effects of transportation	81.4%	8.6%	69.8%	18.6%
Reducing transportation costs for Collin County households	74.3%	10.0%	59.5%	16.7%
Reducing traffic congestion on local streets or roads near my home	68.1%	21.7%	53.7%	26.8%
Giving me more choices in modes of travel	67.6%	16.9%	40.5%	38.1%
Making it easier to move freight within and through the County	66.7%	12.5%	21.4%	47.6%
Making it easier to develop areas that are not now suburban or urban	52.9%	30.0%	16.3%	58.1%

Exhibit 14: Benefits Desired From Mobility Improvements

Of all the potential mobility benefits, the one that is least important to participants is ‘making it easier to develop areas that are not now suburban or urban’. Online participants in particular do not view this as a benefit – only 16.3% felt it was ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’, while 58.1% felt it was ‘somewhat unimportant’ or ‘very unimportant’.

The public’s perspective on the relative value of these mobility benefits will be considered as alternative transportation investments are studied. The analysis should use evaluation measures that indicate how potential improvements perform in terms of providing the benefits stakeholders said were most important.

6.4. Design of Improvements

Exhibit 15 presents stakeholders’ perspectives on design aspects of transportation improvements. The design features are presented in order according to how desirable they were to participants, with the highest ranked feature listed first. Design that is compatible with surrounding uses and areas was rated most highly by both workshop and online participants. This response suggests that context-sensitive design should be an important part of Collin County’s approach to mobility system investments.

	All Workshops		Online	
	Essential/ Desirable	Not necessary/ Should not be included	Essential/ Desirable	Not necessary/ Should not be included
Design that is compatible with the surrounding uses and areas	90.0%	0.0%	76.9%	7.7%
Design that provides safety to all people using the facility	89.9%	4.3%	71.8%	5.1%
Design that minimizes costs over the lifetime of the facility	85.9%	7.0%	71.8%	10.3%
Design that makes the most of technology for way-finding, traffic reporting, etc.	76.1%	8.5%	44.7%	21.1%
Build enough capacity to meet short-term needs (5 to 10 years)	75.0%	4.2%	66.7%	5.1%
Build in additional capacity for needs 25 or 30 years from now	68.6%	8.6%	48.7%	17.9%
Design that reflects the unique identity of the surrounding area	65.3%	6.9%	42.5%	20.0%
Design that is complete – meets the needs of people using all travel modes	64.3%	8.6%	53.8%	12.8%

Exhibit 15: Desired Design Features

Other important design features emphasize safety of all users and reduced lifetime costs for the facilities. These responses show that future mobility improvements should provide safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and well as drivers and passengers of vehicles. They also support efforts to use life-cycle costs (including operation and maintenance over the life of the facility) rather than initial construction cost as the basis for financial evaluation.

These perspectives should guide the consultant team as it develops a set of recommended improvements and a fiscally-constrained plan.

6.5. Next Steps

The consultant team will conduct computer modeling of the mobility system and possible future investments. The modeling results will be evaluated and recommendations will be made to Collin County. The results of this public input process will play an important role in these next steps. The evaluation of modeling results will consider the preferences expressed by stakeholders; evaluation measures will be included so decision-makers can see how well a particular mobility improvement performs on issues that are important to stakeholders. Design preferences will help to shape the consultant team’s recommendations.

When the alternatives have been evaluated and a draft of the updated Mobility Plan has been prepared, there will be another public meeting for review and comment. At this session, the recommendations will be presented in a way that explains to stakeholders how their input has shaped the evaluation and recommendations. Stakeholders who

participated now were interested in continuing their involvement – 77.5% and 55.3% said they would ‘definitely’ stay involved. Hopefully, they will find that the Mobility Plan update recommendations reflect their priorities and suggestions.