

---

---

## **SECTION B**

### QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

**Executive Interview Script for  
Key Stakeholders**

# **Birmingham Intelligent Vehicle Highway System/ Congestion Management System Study**

## **Executive Interviews Invitation (revised final draft)**

Date, 1994

NAME  
TITLE  
ORGANIZATION  
ADDRESS  
CITY STATE ZIP

Dear NAME:

In the coming months, the Alabama Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission, will be developing an Intelligent Vehicle Highway System and Congestion Management System (IVHS/CMS) for the Birmingham area. The consulting firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff has been retained to conduct this study.

This project has two goals. The first goal is to develop a Congestion Management System for the region. This system would provide cost-effective strategies to manage transportation facilities so that traffic congestion is reduced and the mobility of persons and goods is enhanced. The second goal is to develop an Intelligent Vehicle Highway System planning and project deployment process which results in the selection, planning and implementation of IVHS technologies in the Birmingham area.

As part of this study, we are conducting individual interviews with key community and regional leaders. These selected leaders, while they all have an interest in transportation, represent a variety of interests -- public, private and community. We are asking you to be one of our interview participants.

Your in-person interview will be scheduled at your convenience over the next few weeks, and will take less than an hour of your time. Interview questions will cover a variety of topics relating to traffic congestion on highways in Jefferson and Shelby counties. A representative from Parsons Brinckerhoff will be contacting your office within the next few days to set-up a convenient time for your interview.

Study recommendations will be based in part on the information we gather through these interviews, so your input is vital to planning for the region's future mobility. We hope you will agree to participate in this important information gathering activity.

Sincerely,

Director of Transportation

HJS:hs

# Birmingham Congestion Management System Development

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

Dear Oversight Committee Member:

The following *Problem Needs and Opportunities Survey* is being sent out to each member of the Oversight Committee. The purpose of this survey is to obtain input from each committee member in regards to congestion related problems/information occurring in the Birmingham Alabama area. To ensure that your input is included it is imperative that each of you complete this questionnaire *and please* bring it with you to the July 20, 1994 Oversight Committee meeting you will be attending.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

# Birmingham Congestion Management System Development

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

Dear Advisory Committee Member:

The following *Problems Needs and Opportunities Survey* is being sent out to each member of the Advisory Committee. The purpose of this survey is to obtain input from each committee member in regards to congestion related problems/information occurring in the Birmingham Alabama area. To ensure that your input is included it is imperative that *each of you* complete this questionnaire *and please* bring it with you to the July 21,1994 Advisory Committee meeting you will be attending.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

# **Birmingham Congestion Management System Development**

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

## ***Problems, Needs, and Opportunities Survey***

### **I Introduction**

#### Purpose of this survey-

. The purpose of this “take-home” type questionnaire is to allow each individual on both the Advisory and Oversight Committees to provide the Alabama Department of Transportation with their own interpretation of congestion related problems. Furthermore, individuals are given the opportunity to present various needs for developing an MWCMS for the Birmingham metropolitan area.

#### Goals -

. Development of a Congestion Management System (CMS) for the Metropolitan Planning Area which, through a systematic and continuing process, provides information on transportation system performance to decision-makers for selecting and implementing cost-effective strategies to manage transportation facilities so that traffic congestion is reduced and the mobility of persons and goods is enhanced.

. Development of an Intelligent Vehicle Highway System (IVHS) Planning and Project Deployment process which allows for the selection, planning and implementation of M-IS technologies as part of an integrated transportation system.

#### Objectives -

. The IVHS/CMS will provide information on the operational performance status of the elements of the transportation system included in the MWCMS process.

. The IVHS/CMS will identify and assess effective and efficient strategies and actions to reduce traffic congestion.

. The IVHS/CMS process will provide input into the planning process which will lead to the implementation of strategies and actions to reduce congestion and enhance the mobility of persons and goods.

. The IVHS/CMS will monitor the effectiveness of strategies and actions specifically implemented to reduce congestion and enhance the mobility of persons and goods.

. The IVHS/CMS will protect, manage and enhance the transportation system.

***Problems, Needs, and Opportunities Survey***

## **. Institutional Challenges**

- Do you think any institutional barriers exist which would hamper the development of congestion management strategies?
- Do you think elected officials, community groups and local jurisdiction staff along the corridors will support congestion management strategies?
- What steps do you think jurisdictions and other public agencies can take to assist in the development and promotion of congestion management strategies?

## **. Media Challenges**

- The media is extremely important to the successful introduction of congestion management strategies. How do you think the Alabama DOT should work with the media to assure successful implementation of congestion management techniques?

### **III. Partnership Potential of Executive Interview Participant**

#### **. level of Interest/Participation**

- Would your staff/organizations like to receive a periodical newsletter/info. on this project?
- What kinds of communication forums or activities does your organization manage in which study activities/outcomes could be promoted?

#### **. Other Suggestions**

# Birmingham Congestion Management System Development

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

## Executive Interview Outline

### I. Introduction

- . Study goals, objectives, process and timeline
- . Purpose of interviews
- . Areas to be covered during interview

### II. Feedback on Study Components

#### . Locations of Congestion

Do you perceive a congestion problem in the Birmingham Area?

(Utilize attached map, and have participant circle/mark where they perceive areas of congestion)

- How do you define congestion on freeways in the Birmingham Region?
  - 65 mph posted speed limit
  - 55 mph posted speed limit
  - Any speed below 55 mph
  - 50-55 mph
  - 45-49 mph
  - 40-44 mph
  - 35-39 mph
  - 30-34 mph
  - 25-29 mph
  - Any speed below 25 mph
- How do you define congestion on arterials in the Birmingham Region?
  - 55 mph posted speed limit
  - Any speed below 55 mph
  - 50-55 mph
  - 45-49 mph
  - 40-44 mph
  - 35-39 mph
  - 30-34 mph
  - 25-29 mph
  - Any speed below 25 mph

(Query by routes they indicated were congested)

- Do you perceive that (note specific roadway) is always congested or congested just during peak hours?

(Note: probe for time of day they perceive congestion)

- How long does the congestion last?
- How often does congestion occur?
- Is there congestion just during weekdays or also during evenings/weekends?
- Think about the route you regularly travel. If congestion occurred on that route on a regular basis, for how long of a time period **would** you be willing to **travel** at that congested speed before you become frustrated and changed your route, the time you traveled or took some other action? (Query for other action)
  - I would change immediately
  - I'd wait in congestion 1-2 minutes
  - I'd wait in congestion 3-5 minutes
  - I'd wait in congestion 6-8 minutes
  - I'd wait in congestion 9-12 minutes
  - I'd wait in congestion more than 12 minutes

## • Causes of Congestion

Is this congestion caused by:

- Too many cars
  - Accidents
  - Merging onto roadway
  - Discourteous drivers
  - Too many driveways
  - Too many signals
  - Poor access to desired destination
  - Too many signals
  - Other:
  - Debris in roadway
  - changing lanes
  - Exiting off of roadway
  - No alternative routes
  - Road construction
  - Truck traffic
  - Lack of transit service
  - Poorly timed signals
  - Broken down automobiles or other distractions causing "rubbernecking".
- 
-

Incidents are any event which can divert driver's attention and disrupt the normal flow of traffic, including many of the things we just previously discussed like rubbernecking, debris in the roadway, etc. When you are traveling, how often does an incident cause congestion or delay your trip?

- . Less than once a month
- . About once a week
- . About one or two times a month
- More than once a week

## . Solutions to Congestion

What do you think would help to address congestion problems?

- . Widen existing roadways
  - Improve transit service
  - Improve incident management
  - . Safer merging conditions
  - Improve roadway signing
  - . Reserve lanes for HOV's
  - Transit/Carpool Park and Ride lots
  - Telecommuting
  - . Reduce number of driveway accesses
  - . More roadways
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - Timely removal of debris in roadway
  - Improve signal timing and control
  - Limiting truck traffic
  - . Safer exiting conditions ("exit only" lanes, etc.)
  - . Improved roadway striping/markings/signs
  - . Ridesharing (carpool) program
  - Some/higher parking costs
  - Variable work schedules
  - . Remove unwarranted signals
- 
- 

Which solutions to congestion would you accept during your commute, on roads you frequently travel and/or near your home or business?

(Query using list above)

# Birmingham Congestion Management System Development

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

## Interview #1

Tony Petelos  
Jefferson County Representative  
Joint legislative Highway Committee

John Hawkins

Jefferson County Representative  
Joint Legislative Highway Committee

## Interview #2

Mary Buckelew  
Jefferson County Commission Chair

Gary White

Jefferson County Commissioner of Roads and Transportation

## Interview #3

Richard Arrington  
Mayor  
City of Birmingham

## Interview #4

Leland Adams  
Mayor  
Adamsville

Clyde White

Birmingham Regional Plan

## Interview #5

Paul Yeoger  
Commissioner  
Shelby County

Roger Wheeler

Mayor  
Aloaboster

## Interview #6

Transportation Citizens Committee  
Birmingham Regional Planning Commission

## Interview #7

Citizens Advisory Board  
City of Birmingham

## Interview #8

Judy Merritt  
Jefferson State Junior College  
Jefferson State Dialogue Days/Pinson Valley Association

## Interview #9

Don Newton  
Executive Director  
Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce

## Interview #10

Mike Calvert  
Director  
Operation New Birmingham

## Interview #11

John Stewart  
Gresham Smith and Associates  
Choir O . 280 Association Board

## Interview #12

Ted Von Canono  
Director  
Metropolitan Development Board

## **Roger Wheeler, Mayor, Alabaster, Alabama**

### **Feedback on Study Components**

Mayor Wheeler is presiding over a community that is experiencing extremely rapid growth. New areas of housing development are causing special problems regarding traffic and congestion. His views include:

- . Congestion is confined to Highway 31 South and S.R. 119, the two most heavily traveled roads in the Alabaster area.
- . Congestion occurs at any speed below 55 miles per hour on the freeways and 30-34 miles per hour on the arterials.
- . Congestion on U.S. 31 S.R. 119 is heavy at all times during the week and also on weekends.
- . Alternate routes are poor, winding roads.
- . Too many cars are causing too many accidents. Signal timing is a problem as are too signals in some areas.
- . Lack of transit service is noted as a problem, however Park and Ride lots are suggested as a solution.
- . Solutions to congestion include:
  - Widen existing roadways
  - Better signage
  - Extension of transit service
  - Removal of unwarranted signals
  - Variable work schedules
- . Sees the biggest institutional barrier as an educational problem for both corporations and the general public.

### **Media Challenges**

**Mayor Wheeler believes that the media must be informed so as to keep a positive aspect on constructon or changes in conditions.**

## **Partnership**

**A newsletter would be vey desirable, and Mayor Wheeler is now publishing a city wide newsletter and is very interested in any information he can use to inform and educate the community.**

## **Leland Adams**

### **Mayor . Adamsville, Alabama**

Mayor Adams, in office for some 20 years, is heavily involved with county wide planning and is vitally interested in the Corridor X Project. His views are:

#### ***Locations/Times of Congestion***

- . Mayor Adams thinks congestion occurs on U.S. 78 West, from Interstate 59 to Graysville, some 17 miles. Congestion also is a problem on the Minor Parkway (Ensley - Adamsville Road).
- . He thinks that congestion occurs at peak drive times and on holidays or for special events.

#### ***Definition of Congestion***

- . Mayor Adams defines congestion on freeways as a travel speed of 35 - 40 miles per hour interspersed with periodic stop-and-go traffic.
- . He defines congestion on arterials as a travel speed of 35 - 40 miles per hour.
- . Mayor Adams believes that frustration with traffic stems from not knowing the congestion situation. He would tolerate not more than 10 minutes of congestion before he took another route.

#### ***Cause of Congestion***

- . Mayor Adams thinks congestion is caused by:
  - . Too many cars
  - . Lack of alternate routes
    - Poor access to desired location is a major cause of problems because there is no other choice but US 78 to get into Birmingham.
  - . Heavy truck traffic
    - Always a problem, but perceives that mandatory use of route lanes for trucks seem to work in his area.
  - .Lack of transit service
    - Supports the extension of transit service to the Adamsville area.

#### ***Solutions to Congestion***

- . Mayor Adams perceives that solutions to congestion could include :
  - Safer merging and exiting conditions
  - HOV's which might encourage carpooling
  - Park and Ride lots
  - Improvement of signal timing
  - Limiting truck traffic
  - More alternate routes
  - Ridesharing
  - Variable work schedules
- . Mayor Adams thinks that institutional barriers include the railroad (changing bridges) and funding. He also believes that a significant amount of education needs to take place at the corporate level order for ridesharing and telecommuting to be successful congestion management techniques.

### **Birmingham Congestion Management Study**

Executive Interview Abstracts  
Summer, 1994

**Leland Adams**  
**Mayor . Adamsville, Alabama**

*Continued*

***Media Challenges***

Mayor Adams feels that the media does not give enough coverage to the outlining communities in the Birmingham area, and would like to see more pinpoint coverage. He would like to have the media recognize that Highway 78 is a heavily traveled corridor, and respond in their broadcasting accordingly.

***Partnership*** Mayor Adams would like to see more information on the projects. He thinks a newsletter is very desirable and there is an active committee in Adamsville to communicate and educate through the service organizations.

## **Clyde White**

### **Retired, Alabama Department of Transportation**

Mr. White is retired from the Alabama Department of Transportation and spends some time as a consultant to Sam Engineering in Birmingham. His perspective as a highway engineer is unique among interview participants. Mr. Whites' views include:

#### ***Locations/Times of Congestion***

- . Mr. White thinks congestion in the Birmingham Area is confined to two arterials, Highway 280 East and US Highway 78 West.
- . He perceives that congestion only occurs during peak drive times and only on weekdays.

#### ***Definition of Congestion***

- . Mr. White defines congestion on freeways as a travel speed of 50 miles per hour or less.
- . He defines congestion on arterials when traffic is backed up through 3 or 4 signal changes.
- . He would tolerate about ten minutes of congestion before either changing his route or taking some other action.

#### ***Causes of Congestion***

- . Mr. White believes that congestion is generally caused by too many cars on the roadways. He believes that there are not enough access ramps from the freeway in to the city street system.
- . Mr. White thinks incident management is not a problem.

#### ***Solutions to Congestion***

- . Mr. White thinks solutions to congestion could include:
  - Widening existing roadways
  - Possible HOV lanes on Highway 280
  - Carpool / Rideshare lanes where possible
  - Consideration of alternate routes
- . The major institutional barrier which exists is lack of funding.

#### ***Media Challenges***

Mr. White believes the Department of Transportation should designate a group of people to maintain a personal relationship with every media outlet in order to have rapid assistance, especially in emergency situations.

***Partnership*** Mr. White is an active member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and feels that this is the pipeline for change. He believes that education of the political leadership and the public is should be a desired goal.

## **Birmingham Congestion Management Study**

Executive Interview Abstracts

Summer, 1994

**Roger Wheeler**  
**Mayor . Alabaster, Alabama**

Mayor Wheeler is presiding over a community that is experiencing extremely rapid growth. Mayor Wheeler is presiding over a community that is experiencing extremely rapid growth. New areas of housing development are causing special problems regarding traffic and New areas of housing development are causing special problems regarding traffic and congestion. His views include: congestion. His views include:

***Locations/Times of Congestion***

- . Mayor Wheeler thinks congestion is confined to US 31 South and SR 119, the two most heavily traveled roads in the Alabaster area.
- . He thinks congestion on US 31 and SR 119 is heavy at all times during the week and also on weekends
- . He states that on weekends he won't travel SR 119 to US 31 because of congestion.

***Definition of Congestion***

- . Mayor Wheeler defines congestion on freeways as any speed below 55 miles per hour.
- . He defines congestion on arterials as a travel speed of 30 -34 miles per hour.
- . He would tolerate not more than a 3 to 5 minute delay due to congestion before he took another route.

***Cause of Congestion***

- . Mayor Wheeler thinks congestion is caused by:
  - . Too many signals
  - . Alternate routes consist of poor, winding roads . Too many cars are causing too many accidents
  - . Poor signal timing in some areas
  - . Lack of transit service

***Solutions to Congestion***

- . Mayor Wheeler believes that solutions to congestion could include :
  - Widen existing roadways
  - Improved signage
  - Extension of transit service
  - Removal of unwarranted signals
  - Variable work schedules
  - Park and Ride lots
- . He believes that higher parking charges shouldn't be instituted without an alternative such as transit being offered.
- . Mayor Wheeler sees the biggest institutional barrier as one of a lack of education. He believes that through education misconceptions and hostile attitudes can be rectified. He thinks that written communication is very important and far more effective than meetings, and encourages the use of newsletters and newspapers as a communication mechanism. communication mechanism.

**Birmingham Congestion Management Study**

Executive Interview Abstracts  
Summer, 1994

**Roger Wheeler**  
**Mayor . Alabaster, Alabama**

*Continued*

**Media Challenges**

Mayor Wheeler believes that the media must be informed on a regular basis so as to keep a positive aspect on construction or changes in conditions so the media doesn't think the Highway department has "anything to cover up".

**Partnership** Mayor Wheeler thinks a newsletter or information which could reproduced would be very desirable. He is now publishing a city-wide newsletter and is very interested in any information he can use to inform and educate the community.

**INTERVIEW WITH ROGER WHEELER  
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF ALABASTER**

Q: Mr. Mayor, what are the locations of congestion that you perceive in the Birmingham area?

A: The main are of congestion in Alabaster at this time is 31 Highway from Highway 119 to the south city limits. That is the main congestion. We do have some congestion coming off the interstate coming south on 31 Highway to get to 119. That area is part of congestion, too. On Industrial Road, which feeds off of 31 Highway to County Road 95 is a big point of congestion. We do have, at times on 31 highway, at peak hours, work hours, people going from work on 31 Highway from 119 up to County Road 52 in Pelham, so that's the main areas of congestion we're having right now.

Q: Now we're going to talk about congestion and I'd like for you to look at the questionnaire that I've given you there. There are some boxes under how do you define congestion on freeways in the Birmingham region, so this really is going to encompass the entire area and it has to do with at what speed do you feel things become congested and if you will mark the boxes you think apply, for me please, sir.

A: Oh, I think really through here it's any speed that when you get down below 55. We're out from Birmingham a little ways, it gets down below that, then it starts getting congested. I've noticed that people are moving along at pretty good speeds they don't get near as congested.

Q: Yes sir, all right, so you think 50-55 miles per hour.

A: Anything below 55 miles per hour right through here on the freeway is congested.

Q: And on the arterials, which are the feeder roads such as Highway 31 or Highway 119, what speed do you think congestion occurs there?

A: Tough question.

Q: I know it varies at certain times of the day.

A: It really does, that's the reason I was trying to come up with a speed that it, uh, some of the speed limits through here is even up to 50, but it moves along pretty good there, but when you get to the red lights, then you start over again, so 30-34 miles per hour, what I feel like it gets congested.

Q: That's good. There on the routes you have indicated, do you think that, say U.S. Highway 31 is always congested, or is it just congested during peak hours?

A: Not just at peak hours, there are some days that it's congested too, it's just at peak hours it is, you know, but there are some days at say peak hours, what I'm talking about, going to and from work and at lunch time, from so many people going, but also some certain days, say like on a Friday, for some reason, all day long it's congested, all day, and it's not every Friday, but I've noticed that too, so it's not that it's just during peak times. I don't know what's going on at times, but more and more people are moving here, I guess is adding to the problem.

Q: Yes sir. Well you've answered two of the questions. About the third one though, is there just congestion during the weekdays or do you also have it on weekends?

to come into Alabaster on weekends because it, you know, it's backed up all the way near to the railroad tracks, so, no- it's on weekends too.

Q: All right, sir, now on the route you normally travel ever-day, it congestion occurred on that route on a regular basis, for how long a period of time would you be willing to travel at that congested speed before you became frustrated and changed your route, the time you left or took some other action?

A: You're talking about being still backed up?

Q: Backed up or just traveling at a very low congested speed, possibly.

A: I'd say 3-5 minutes.

Q: Causes of congestion in this area are listed. I think there are twenty choices here, and if you will mark those and as you go down and mark them, if you would talk about each one for me, please.

A: Okay. Too many cars is one thing, because I've noticed, one thing I've noticed, everybody, not everybody, but most families, husband and wife got a car, children got a car, so you know, you're probably on average, at least three cars to a family, now a days, at least. That, you know is a problem, where back there, years ago, you know, you had maybe one car to a family, but I can see where, when all these roads were built, you probably had an average of one car to a family, you know, you got way more people and I suppose we are living in a different time, where we, our children, we buy that car when he turns sixteen, for some reason, but that is one main causes of. I think accidents do cause some congestion, you know, but it's not an, I don't know if you want to talk about an everyday occurrence or not. Is that what we're talking about?

Q: Well, yes sir, generally speaking, if accidents tend to clog up traffic in that area for any length of time, certainly.

A: They certainly do, I know that, because I've been caught in them. I'm looking down city here, and I can see just about, you go down through here, merging onto roadway. Discourteous drivers, I have not seen to much of discourteous driving. Most times people will let you in if they can. I don't think too many driveways is that major of a problem. We try to not have too many driveways coming out onto a main, major road. We try to get them on a....

Q: Service road?

A: Right, Too many, hey, this is one thing I believe. There's too many signals, I really do. I can see just about, you go down through here, merging onto roadway. Discourteous drivers, I have not seen to much of discourteous driving. Most times people will let you in if they can. I don't think too many driveways is that major of a problem. We try to not have too many driveways coming out onto a main, major road. We try to get them on a.....

Q: Service road?

A: Right, Too many, hey, this is one thing I believe. There's too many signals, I really do. I think that causes more problems than anything. A lot of people don't agree but they always want re lights everywhere, but I think sometimes red lights are the biggest problem. I think, there should be some other kind of alternative to having traffic signals. I don't know, people that deal with traffic know more about them then I do, but to me , that causes lots of problems.

Poor access to desired destinations?

Q: I think that would have to do mostly with alternate routes, parallel routes.

A: That is definitely a problem. A big, big problem in this area. The alternatives we have are poor, bad roads. You name it buddy, they are bad, bad roads to get around, that's the reason lot of people won't take them.

Debris in roadway, no.

Changing lanes, you can't change, we only have lanes. Exiting off of roadway, that is a problem on some of our roads because like 119, we have a lot of large subdivisions that turn to the left and going south in the evening, I mean, you know, you back up and the next thing you know somebody comes and rear ends somebody and that's a big, big problem. Road construction. Well, we haven't had too much road construction but I can see where it can, but I've noticed that the state and the county has gotten to where they provide other lanes even when they take out a bridge or put a temporary bridge so I don't know that is a big problem here but I can see back traffic in certain instances when you are working on road and there's not another alternative. In this area it hasn't been a major problem.

Truck traffic...we have designated truck routes. It used to be a problem here before the interstate opened, in Alabaster, here on 31 that took the biggest part of your big trucks off 31, so it's really not a big problem in Alabaster.

Lack of transit service....yes, there's a problem. I think you know if we had a good transit service that serviced here, the Greater Metropolitan Area, I'm going to call it, which I considered Alabaster part of it. If we had a good transit service sometimes I feel like a lot of people would take it instead of driving their own vehicle and that way it would help with some of the traffic problems that we do have, so I definitely believe we do need some kind of good transit service if it didn't even come all the way into Shelby County, but a place where you could park and maybe catch some kind of transit service. I know when I go to Birmingham I get aggravated sometimes sitting in traffic and it would eliminate a lot of that. It would let the people that travel through here a better way to get through if we weren't all on the roads.

Poorly timed signals, that has been a problem. I think we're talking about too many signals. Maybe if we had some signals that were timed to certain times of the day more that could let traffic flow more in one direction. We have one down here on 31-119, no turn right on red. Well, there're certain times during the day that it's crazy to sit there because there's no traffic coming from the other way, but there's a sign-you can't turn right on red and there's no way to get out and someone could sit there all day but I definitely believe that could be a way to deal with. Some of these traffic signals where there are programmed and I'm sure there are some like that but not enough of them and not any around here like that. Broken down automobiles and other distractions....I think that's not a big problem here.

Q: All right we're going to talk about incidents. Incidents are any event which can divert a drivers attention and disrupt the normal flow of traffic, including many of the things we've previously discussed like rubbernecking, debris, and so on. When you're traveling how often does an incident cause congestion or delay your trip? Now that can also include an accident or something like that.

A: I haven't really noticed that many incidents like you're talking about. I do every now and then see them and maybe once or twice a month is more like it in this area that I've seen and I pretty well hit the roads. We're out enough that on the interstate you don't have that problem and we do have a little problem on 119 with a few accidents.

Q: Now we're going to get into some solutions to congestion. What do you think would help to address congestion problems? You're given quite a few choices here, you might want to mark every one of them.

A: Probably do as I look down through there. Oh boy!

Q: One I know that you just mentioned was transit/carpool park and ride lots.

A: That is one, and I can see wider existing roadways I would say and we haven't got transit service so we couldn't improve it. But I think transit would be a good idea down here and we're trying to do more on some of these others. What is improved roadways signing?

Q: A good example of that would be where you have an actual street sign, you put the block number on there, for example this is the sixteen hundred block of Center street. Would that be helpful?

A: I believe so, I do. When you're going down through there instead of looking to catch the numbers on buildings and stuff, you have all the streets. I can see where that would help a good bit because I've done that myself and that would have helped if we had it. On some of these we work real hard, those driveway accesses and more roadway so it's not a big problem. Improving signal time and control definitely, we're already living in this truck traffic so that's not a big problem.

I do believe in the safer exiting condition.

On improve pretty well the roadway striping and marking.

Ride sharing? Yes, that is definitely a program that needs more and more thought about it.

Some higher parking costs?

Q: Yes sir, the theory behind that is to make people leave their cars at home, that would be the down town area, I assume.

A: Yes it could work, but I think, I could see where that would work.

Q: But you would have to have transit service available.

A: If you do it with the transit service I could see that but to charge higher you don't offer them an alternative, I don't think that's fair, I just don't think that's fair.

And these variable work schedules, I agree with that, you know, that would help a lot. I don't know how anything that's unwarranted, move that sucker out cause it's going to cause problems.

Q: Some of the largest corporations and banks could certainly help.

A: This last one I believe in, remove unwarranted signals. I believe there should be studies done and anything that's unwarranted, move that sucker out cause it's going to cause problems.

Q: All right sir, which solution to congestion would you accept during your commute on roads that you frequently travel or near you home? Basically we want you to use the list above. I'm assuming you have one or two there that really strike home to you.

A: Well the improve signal timing and control, I'm just going by what we have here presently; safe exiting conditions or needing exit lanes, only if you turn to all these subdivisions and places. Well, remove unwarranted signals and also I was looking here to see if you had one for more roadways, I guess it would come under more roadways about having some additional way that you could take, alternative routes. I guess that would be under more roadways wouldn't it, these are the ones that would be high priority I think.

Q: Institutional challenges, do you think there are any institutional barriers that exist which could hamper the development of congestion management strategies?

A: I think so. There's a lot of them. People are instilled with this idea that more traffic signals you've got, the better off you are. You need one at every little road that you go into and that's not the case, it's really not, I can see that and I think this is an institutional. I guess that's what we're talking about, are you talking about Highway Department theory they have?

Q: Possibly, we're also talking about the possibility of corporations not being amiable to variable work schedules or telecommuting.

A: I definitely think there's a lot of them. But I think if you educate people, I've been in a lot of meetings and have people come there hostile about different things but once they're educated about them they will really change their minds and be supportive. That's one thing, I think that education of the people is the biggest thing. When we change something we try to do it in the elementary schools and present it to the elementary pupils and they will take it home and tell their parents about it and we seem to get more across some times doing it like that then we do if we have a public hearing down here and wait for people to show up and if people are not going to show up they're not going to know about it then when you do it you have a big problem. We found out if you can some way get it to the school system, especially the elementary part of it, they will take it home and tell their parents about it and the parents will know about.

Q: Do you think elected officials, you peers in, and especially other communities around Birmingham, elected officials, community groups, and local jurisdiction staff along these corridors will support congestion management strategies?

A: I think so, I do. We talk about it all the time that something needs to be done. To see the big picture I think you're going to have to do a lot of studies on it.

Q: What steps do you think some of these other jurisdictions could take to help to implement these things?

A: Well, I think they can meet with the different people doing these studies and put their input into it and then make a commitment to work, everybody work together solving a lot of these problems and I think it can be addressed that way but if you've got one group that is not willing to work at something then it's going to cause a problem as for public wise.

Q: The media is extremely important to the successful introduction of congestion management strategies. How do you think Alabama DOT should work with the media to assure successful implementation techniques?

A: Well, I think they should keep them informed on anything that's going on or any project that's coming up or any new type of project and that way they don't learn about it through something else and try to make it look like a negative type thing instead of positive type thing. I think they pretty well know what is going on, and in my dealings with them they will pretty will put it in a positive aspect, but if they are the last to find out about it, for some reason they think you're trying to cover something up, you know, and I think that's the biggest thing- to keep them well informed and they shouldn't have any problems with media.

Q: Would your staff like to receive a newsletter on this project from time to time?

A: Sure.

Q: What other kinds of communication forums or activities could be done and where could we promote these types of things?

A: Well that's what I'm saying. I think if you keep people educated as for a newsletter is better than a forum, what we do here in the city, we have a newsletter that we put out on a monthly basis and that has done more good than anything. You can have a council meeting or any kind of meeting you want. You're just going to have a few people to show up, so you're not going to get the quota. Informal as they should be, but if you have some kind of newsletter or something put out that goes to everybody, that is the way we have come to believe that you can inform the public, because people are just not going to come to these meetings and public forums like they did years ago. You are going to have to do it through that or through the media some way to keep them informed, like when we had the public hearings for the four lanes down

Here, we had very few people show up. You just don't get people out to these forums and stuff like you did in years past, but media or through the newspaper is the best way, I assure you.

Q: Any other suggestions of what we might want to do?

A: No, I think that would be a big area, to keep everyone informed through the media of what's going on, because we get phone calls all the time. We get more and more people moving down here, averaging 400-500 new homes a year and the first thing they see after they move down here is the congestion and then they call and want to know what's being done, and then you have to go through this spiel about what's going on. If they are informed through the news, the newspaper, or whatever, it would really help things. When they do something like this I have a lot of confidence that people have seen it and it really helps me.

Q: Thank you very much for your time.

## **Virginia Williams, Office of the Mayor of Birmingham**

### **Feedback on study Components**

As designated interviewee for Mayor Richard Arrington, Ms. Williams, in her capacity as Chief of Staff for the Mayor, is exposed to all areas of city problems. Her view include:

- . There is no real congestion in the Birmingham area.
- . There is peak hour congestion on Hwy 280, I-65 and I-59/20 interchange, and general congestion on Hwy 78 west.
- . Feels that congestion is caused by too many cars, too many driveways, poorly timed signals, broken down automobiles, and poor drivers.
- . Indicates improved transit service, park and ride lots, improved incident management, and improved signal timing are possible congestion solutions.
- . Feels that local governments are working well together, but must identify a common goal for implementation.

### **Media Challenges**

Ms. Williams feels that Alabama DOT should hire a media consulting firm to assist in properly educating the public.

### **Partnership**

Ms. Williams suggests involving the ninety-nine neighborhood committees in the city to help promote this congestion study and its strategies.

## INTERVIEW WITH VIRGINIA WILLIAMS

Q: As you drive everyday can you tell us the areas where you perceive congestion to be in the Birmingham area?

A: There basically isn't any congestion where I drive everyday.

Q: If you on the interstate system in Birmingham can you tell me what speed you would feel congestion to start?

A: 45-49 miles per hour.

Q: On other roads such as arterials like 280, or US 78 West, where would you think congestion would start there?

A: 25-29 miles per hour.

Q: Do you perceive that any roadway is always congested or congested only during peak hours?

A: I think Hwy 78 is always congested, I think 280 is congested during peak hour, I-65 and I-20/59 at the route interchange is congested at peak hours and near accidents that affect it.

Q: Do you perceive any congestion during weekends, or is it just during weekdays?

A: Not weekends unless there's an accident.

Q: On the route you regularly travel if congestion occurred on that route, how long would you be willing to travel at a congested speed before you became frustrated and either changed your route, or the time you traveled?

A: 30 seconds.

Q: Briefly tell me, from the list, what you think are the causes of congestion?

A: Too many cars, accidents, too many driveways, poorly timed signals, broken down automobiles, road construction, and I would add poor drivers.

Q: Incidents are any event which can divert a drivers attention and disrupt the normal flow of traffic. When your traveling how often does an incident cause congestion or delay your trip.

A: Less than once a month.

Q: Solutions to congestion are listed here, if you will please check those applicable, and briefly discuss them for me.

A: Improved transit service, improved incident management, transit car pool park and ride lots, reduce number of driveway accesses, I would consider some of these things such as timely removal of debris in roadway as part of incident management. Improving signal timing and ride share.

Q: On you commute which of these solutions would be acceptable to you?

A: Mine is not a very good example because it takes me three minutes to drive to work.

Q: You must live on South Side.

A: I do.

Q: Do you think there are any institutional barriers which exist that hamper the development or congestion management strategies?

A: I don't really think so. I think we have a pretty good start and I think the different levels of government are working great together, it's just a matter of getting it implemented between the Federal, State, and Local Governments.

Q: Do you think the local jurisdictions and local elected governments will be very cooperative along that line, and try to implement these strategies?

A: Yes, I think the implementation is not really an issue, deciding what needs to be implemented is the issue, because I think we still have people who think that more lanes will solve the problem and I don't believe that more lanes solve any problem. So once the decisions are made I think we can do it

Q: Are there any steps you think the jurisdictions and other public agencies can take to assist in the development of these strategies?

A: The biggest step all of us can take together, and that we have to take together, is improving mass transit. Without that we're not going to make very much progress.

Q: The media is extremely important to the successful introduction of congestion management strategies. How do you think Alabama DOT should work with the media to assure successful implementation of congestion management techniques?

A: Well, I think it's all a matter of educating the public and media is not really my thing so I have a little trouble responding to this one. What DOT should probably do is to hire a consulting firm to do it for them because they don't have that necessary track record with the media that we need.

Q: Would your staff, or organization here like to receive a periodic news letter on this project?

A: Sure.

Q: Are there any other forums or activities that you are involved in, where the study activities here could be promoted by your organization?

A: There are many, I would suggest that our planning commission and its committees should currently be a part of this. Beyond that all ninety-nine of our neighborhoods could be, there's not a better promotional structure than that.

Q: Thank you very much for your time.

## **Gary White, Commissioner Jefferson County**

### **Feedback on Study Components**

As Jefferson County Commissioner in charge of Roads and Construction, Mr. White is very interested in the problems addressed in this study. His views include:

- . While the congestion problem isn't bad in the Birmingham area, there is peak hour congestion.
- . Congestion occurs on the interstates at 40-44 mph and 30-34 miles per hour on the thoroughfare.
- . Would change work hours if possible to avoid congestion.
- . Indicated that causes of congestion include too many signals, road construction, rubbernecking and lack of truck-only lanes.
- . Feels that improving transit service will not help state solve problems, however, HOV lanes, limiting truck traffic, carpool programs, and grade separations are possible solutions.
- . Feels that variable work schedules- i.e. flex time would be an effective alternative.

### **Media Challenges**

Feels that Alabama DOT should be more sensitive to the public's need and desire for better information, especially through improvement of the public hearing process.

### **Partnership**

Mr. White is actively involved with the MPO and Horizon 280 to better serve the county and its planning efforts.

## INTERVIEW WITH GARY WHITE

Q: Commissioner White do you perceive there to be a congestion problem in the Birmingham area?

A: Well, obviously at certain times of the day there are congestion problems. Normally to and from, morning and afternoon traffic and obviously around schools during time to drop off and pick up children. I wouldn't say we have a real bad congestion problem.

Q: Are there certain corridors or arterials that you think are problematic?

A: Yes, of course, all the interstates seem to be tied up in the morning, 280 is one of the biggest bottlenecks we seem to have, in the morning and in the afternoon. 65 is a little more open until it gets into the 20-59 junction downtown and then it seems to go haywire, but basically I think we have pretty good roads and you can get around town pretty quickly.

Q: How do you define congestion on the freeways in the Birmingham area with regard to a speed?

A: I'd say anything below 40-44 miles per hour would be congestion.

Q: As far as the arterials are concerned, how would you define those congestion speeds?

A: 30-34 miles per hour.

Q: Do you perceive that Highway 280 is always congested or is congestion just during peak hours?

A: During peak hours.

Q: And normally how long does that last?

A: It lasts in the morning about and unfortunately about an hour and a half or two hours in the afternoon.

Q: Does that congestion occur just during weekdays?

A: Yes, Saturday and Sunday is fine.

Q: On the route that you normally travel, if congestion occurred on that route on a regular basis, for how long a period a time would you be willing to travel at that congested speed before you became frustrated and changed your route or the time you traveled or took some other action?

A: Well, if I had the possibility of changing the time I would do that, that's what I would personally do. However, if I worked for someone who required that I be there 8:00 to 5:00, I wouldn't have much option to change that, but if I had the option I would change the time of going to work.

Q: How long would you wait in that congestion before you took some other action such as an alternate route?

A: Do you mean number of minutes?

Q: Yes,

A: Probably 15 or 20 minutes.

Q: Let's talk about causes of congestion. There are quite a few choices here, if you will, please look through these and mark the ones you think are pertinent and discuss those as you mark them.

A: Too many signals, in a lot of cases, such as 280. If we could take out the traffic signals that stop the traffic and build clover leaves or what they call multiple grade entrances and exits I think that we could eliminate a good deal of the problem on 280. In most other cases, such as Homewood, you have to have traffic lights to handle the traffic there, and there are too many cars. Road construction is sometimes a problem, we are the city of orange barrels and it seems that we are always working or doing something to improve the roadway and obviously rubbernecking with that and traffic will slow to a crawl so people can see what is going on and that slows traffic up terribly.

Q: Incidents are any event which can.

A: Let me go back to the other item, I was in Atlanta the other day and I noticed something that I think can be very helpful in our area and it allows large trucks to only be in the right lane or the right two lanes only, if you're on the freeway, and there are four or five lanes of traffic. I was driving in this morning on Highway 79 from Tarrant and three large trucks had all lanes blocked and you virtually had to travel behind these three trucks down the road and if these three trucks were required to be over to the right it

Q: We were talking about incidents interrupting the normal flow of traffic, when you're traveling how often does an incident cause congestion or delay your trip? An incident such as a broken down automobile or a traffic accident?

A: Probably one or two times a month.

Q: Let's get into solutions to congestion. There are many choices here, if you would check those and discuss the ones that you think are pertinent.

A: Well, we've talked about transit service but the reality is that I don't believe many people would ride the transit service if it were free. They would prefer to just be able to get in the car and like me, I can be in Homewood and I can be downtown and in the courthouse in seven minutes and to stand outside and wait on the bus and then walk to the courthouse would probably be 15 or 20 minutes or it may be a half hour or longer. The problem is that we can travel so freely on the freeways so the numbers are falling as far as transit ridership every year. I don't see transit as taking hold in this area. Reserve lanes for HOV's probably make sense if you have room for the additional lanes. Limiting truck traffic to use the right lane instead of blocking the entire roadway, and a carpool program might be excellent if used in conjunction with HOV's or else there would be no advantage for people to use it. Removal or unwarranted signals, if we could find ways for grade separations, I know it's an expense, but obviously on 280 if we could eliminate those intersections such as Cherokee, Rocky Ridge, and Dolly Ridge this would allow traffic to get on down to Shelby County where it belongs.

Q: On your commute everyday, which of these solutions would you accept as being best to solve the problem?

A: Well, I can get to work in seven minutes, I really don't have any problem.

Q: Do you think that any institutional barriers exist that would hamper the development of congestion management strategies?

A: Earlier you asked the question, what would I do in a situation where I was having traffic congestion, what would be my alternatives? One would be to come in at a different time, have flex time. I don't know if flextime is popular, or is something that the business community feels is important enough to

Implement but I think people coming in at seven o'clock instead of eight o'clock would be helpful. Come at seven and get off at four, come at nine and get off at six, that would be helpful.

Q: Do you think elected officials, community groups, and local jurisdiction staff along the corridors will support a congestion management strategy?

A: Yes

Q: What steps do you think jurisdictions and other public agencies can take to assist in the development and promotion of congestion management strategies?

A: Well, I think they need to have input and they need to be sure that the people in their communities have input, and have the communications open from the cities out to people. If that works, and I think that would be the biggest assistance from municipalities.

Q: The media is extremely important to the successful introduction of congestion management strategies. How do you think Alabama DOT should work with the media to assure successful implementation of congestion management techniques?

A: Alabama DOT, I think are very capable people, the blunder of handing our leaflets on Hwy 280 at drive time was almost a joke. It was all the radio stations here, people made fun of it, here is the state trying to solve the traffic problem by creating a nuisance at drive time which may have complicated an already existing bad problem by stopping traffic and actually handing people leaflets, it was so bad that it was actually printed in the paper, and on every talk show you could hear. There has to be a better way, if Alabama DOT doesn't have any better idea of how to contact folks than that then maybe we ought to work through the counties and the cities and see if we can't get those leaflets distributed for them instead of handing them to folks out the window. Public hearings, a lot of times the Alabama DOT is not very sensitive to the public need to know their idea of public hearing is having diagrams or designs engineered of roadways, instead of having someone going around and answering questions, they don't normally like confrontational situation, which I don't blame them, I don't either. A lot of times those people want to get all the questions answered. I think they have a better feeling that we're not trying to hide something from work, it's not very sensitive to elected officials who have to represent those districts, and it's not very sensitive to those people who are out there trying to get answers and find out what's going on. They're not hiding information but they're not as open as I think they could be.

Q: Would your staff or organization here like to receive a periodical newsletter on this project?

A: Absolutely

Q: Can you tell me what kind of communication forum that you might be involved in, or manage, which study the activities and outcomes of projects such as this?

A: Well I'm Horizon 280 and that group tries to monitor the work on 280. The aesthetic beauty of 280, controlling signs, and refurbishing the ground that kind of thing, obviously the traffic concerns. I'm also on the MPO with Jefferson County, which we try to look at all the traffic problems in and around Jefferson County and try to respond to those problems.

# Birmingham Congestion Management System Development

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

## *Executive Interview Preliminary Findings*

### ***Locations of Congestion***

- \* US 78 West from Arkadelphia Road to the Walker County line
- \* **US 280** East
- \* **I-65 from Gardendale to Alabaster**
- \* US 31 South
- \* **SR 119**
- \* **I-59/20 from** the convergence ramp west to Bessemer
- \* Lakeshore Drive (SR 149) through Homewood
- \* Minor Parkway (Ensley-Adamsville Road)
- \* SR 150 from Hoover to Bessemer

# **Birmingham Congestion Management System Development**

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

*Executive Interview Preliminary Findings*

## **Times of Congestion**

- \* **Confined Mostly to Peak Hours on Majority of Routes**
- \* **Event Related Congestion**

# Birmingham Congestion Management System Development

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

## *Executive Interview Preliminary Findings*

### *Causes of Congestion*



**Volume**



**Lack of Transit Service**



**Lack of Alternative Routes**



**Too Many Signals/Poor Signal Timing**

- Center Point Parkway • Old Springville Road
- All of us 31



**Accidents/Accident Removal**



**Truck Traffic - volume/size**



**Poor Access Control**

(especially around new commercial developments)



**Poor/Discourteous Driving Habits**

# Birmingham Congestion Management System Development

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

## *Executive Interview Preliminary Findings*

### **Solutions to Congestion'**



**Increase/Improve/Extend Transit Service**

\*

**Increase Locations of Park and Ride Lots**

\*

**Implement "Full Service" Ridesharing Program**

- **Employment Site Programs**
- **Vanpooling**

\*

**Improve Signalization**

- **Timing .Placement**



**Improve Truck Traffic Policies**



**Improve Accident Response**



**Speed limit Enforcement**

(Speeding causes accidents which lead to congestion)

\*

**Improve/Widen Roads at "Hot Spots"**

# **Birmingham Congestion Management System Development**

A study sponsored by the Alabama Department of Transportation

## ***Executive Interview Preliminary Findings***

### *Challenges*

- \* **Lack of Funding**
- \* **Lack of Transportation Options**
- \* **Lack of Education**
  - **Driving Behaviors**
  - **Impact Individual Choice has on Congestion**
  - **Role Employers Play in Congestion Management**

## **SOLUTIONS TO CONGESTION**

- Timely removal of debris in roadway
- Safer merging conditions
- Improve incident management
- Transit / carpool park-and-ride lots
- Reserve lanes for HOV's
- Improve roadway signing
- Telecommuting
- Consolidation of driveway accesses
- More roadway
- Improve transit service
- Improve signal timing and control
- Better manage traffic
- Safer existing conditions (exit only" lanes, etc.)
- Improve roadway striping | marking | signs
- Remove unwarranted signals
- Congestion pricing (Some / higher parking costs)
- Variable work schedules
- Ridesharing (carpool | vanpool) program
- Additional lanes

# IVHS/CMS LOCATIONS OF CONGESTION

(Results from the Problems, Needs, & Opportunities Survey)

ROAD	LOCATION	COMMENTS
US280	FROM SR119 TO US31	Especially heavy from US31 to I-459.
I-85	FROM US31 (NORTH OF DOWNTOWN) TO US31 (SOUTH OF DOWNTOWN)	Especially heavy from US31 (north of downtown) to the downtown area. Numerous surveys revealed heavy congestion in the Vestavia Hills/Hoover area (north of I-459 to the downtown area).
US78	FROM JUST SOUTHEAST OF THE ADAMSVILLE AREA TO I-20159	Most who reported this area gave the same accounts as to where congestion occurs.
I-20	FROM CR80 (NEAR LEEDS) TO THE JCT WITH I-59	Numerous reports of heavy congestion from US78 to the JCT with I-59.
I-59	FROM JUST NORTH OF I-459 TO THE JCT WITH I-20	Heavier congestion at SR75 and one report for the interchange at Chalkville Road.
I-20/59	FROM THE JCT OF I-20 AND I-59 TO THE 18TH AVE (JAYBIRD RD) INTERCHANGE	Especially heavy congestion in the downtown area from SR79 to SR289.
SR119	WEST OF US31 - FROM HILLS ROAD TO US31 (SOUTH OF ALABASTER) EAST OF US31 - FROM US31 TO US280	
us31	FROM SR119 (ALABASTER) TO JUST NORTH OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA	Especially heavy from SR150 to I-65 (Hoover area). The interchange at I-20/59 had numerous reports of congestion as well.
SR150	FROM US11 TO US31	Most heavy from the I-459 Interchange to US31.
SR281	FROM CR105 TO US31 (PELHAM AREA)	
us11	FROM JUST WEST OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA TO SR150	
SR79	FROM I-20/59 TO CARSON ROAD	Especially congested around the East Lake Blvd. /I-20159 area.
SR75	FROM US11 TO THE 23RD/25TH AVE. AREA (CENTER POINT)	Numerous surveys reported the area along US11 and I-59 at SR75.
SR149	THE ENTIRE ROAD	The SR149 (Lake Shore Drive) corridor along I-85 is most congested.

NOTE: All interstates listed above are classified as freeways and all other roads (US and State Roads) are classified as arterials.

# **Birmingham Congestion Management**

## ***Executive Interviews with MPO Citizen Advisory Committee***

Citizen Advisory Committee Interview was held as part of the overall public information and involvement process. This meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee to the Birmingham Area MPO was held on July 12, 1994. Some 14 members of this committee responded to our invitation from the MPO office to participate in our interview and to provide us with excellent information regarding congestion in the Jefferson-Shelby County study area. The participants were eager to identify areas of congestion and possible causes for these congested corridors. The percent of positive responses is shown for each question on the attached questionnaire.

## **Interview Findings**

### ***Identified Congested Corridors***

- . I-65 - The North/South corridor congested from Gardendale north of Birmingham to Alabaster where the South Study terminates.
- . I-59/I-20 - Congested from the convergence ramp East to Bessemer.
- . U.S. 78 West - Congested from Arkadelphia Road to the Walker County Line
- . U.S. Highway 31 - From Gardendale to Alabaster
- . State Route 150 - From Hoover to Bessemer
- . Lakeshore Drive through Homewood (S.R. 149)
- . Finley Avenue By-pass
- . Centerpoint Parkway
- . Old Springville Road
- . U.S. 280 East
- . State Route 79 from County Line through Tarrant

### ***Identified Causes of Congestion***

- . Large Trucks - All participants agree that heavy volume of truck traffic on all routes was a significant congestive factor along with apparent poor driver education regarding highway

usage. Participants stated U.S. 78 West was especially congested with large trucks on this “Birmingham to Memphis Corridor.”

- . Accident Removal - this is a significant cause of congestion on all interstates and all major feeder routes.
- . Debris - Roadway debris is very evident on all interstates with a very slow removal process according to participants.
- . Driver Education - Poor driving habits and lack of education are common to all routes.
- . Signaling - Feeder routes, such as Center Point Parkway and Old Springville Road, and all of U.S.-31 were identified as very poorly signaled.
- . Commercial Development - U.S. 280 is the main area affected by development. U.S. 280 has too many side entry and exit areas to shopping and commercial districts.
- . Signage - Most areas could benefit from better and more properly placed signs.

### ***Specific Congestion Solutions***

- . Speed Limit Enforcement - All participants agree that lack of enforcement of speed limits caused problems that are controllable with greater law enforcement presence.
- . HOV Lanes - Only U.S. 280 was felt to be a candidate for the treatment.
- . RideShare - This service is currently being used on a very limited basis on the North/South Corridor of I-65. Expansion of the services was recommended by the panel; however, all voiced that there is a lack of participation in the Regional Transit Authority by communities surrounding Birmingham.
- . Van Pooling - Participants agreed this solution held promise with proper promotion. Methods such as this are new to this area and should be further explored.
- . Employer Assistance - The panel agrees that promotion of Rideshare and Van Pooling by employers in the area along with flexible work hours, would help significantly in the control of congestion. Employee incentive plans were also discussed.

# Feedback on Study Components

## *Locations of Congestion*

1. Identify locations where you perceive congestion problems in the Birmingham Area. (Utilize the attached map by circling/markings these areas of congestion).

**REFER TO THE ATTACHED SPREADSHEET FOR THESE RESULTS**

2. At what speed would you consider a freeway to be congested? (check only one)

(% Respondents)

- 0  65 mph posted speed limit
- 0  55 mph posted speed limit
- 17  Any speed below 55 mph
- 8  50-55 mph
- 17  45-49

(% Respondents)

- 33  40-44 mph
- 8  35-39 mph
- 8  30-34 mph
- 0  25-29 mph
- 8  Any speed below 25 mph

1. At what speed would you consider an arterial to be congested? (check only one)

(% Respondents)

- 0  Any speed below 55 mph
- 0  50-55 mph
- 8  45-49 mph
- 23  40-44 mph

(% Respondents)

- 15  35-39 mph
- 23  30-34 mph
- 23  25-29 mph
- 8  Any speed below 25 mph

1. Do you perceive that congestion occurs during specific times of the day: **100% Yes**

a. If so, at what times? **AM 92% Mid day 31% PM 92%**

b. How long do periods of congestion typically last:

**>1 hr 10% 1 hr 30% 1-1½ hrs 20% 1½-2 hrs 20% 2 hrs 20%**

c. How often does congestion occur? **Weekdays 77% (5 days/week)**

d. Is there congestion just during weekdays or also during evenings/weekends?

**Just weekdays 54% Weekends 38% SPL Events 15%**

2. Think about the route you regularly travel. If congestion occurred on that route on a regular basis, for how long of a time period would you be willing to travel at that con-

gested speed before you became frustrated and changed your route, the time you traveled (i.e. - begin 15 minutes earlier or later), or took some other action? (check only one)

(% Respondents)

8  I would change immediately

25  I would wait in congestion  
1-2 minutes

17  I would wait in congestion  
3-5 minutes

(% Respondents)

17  I would wait in congestion  
6-8 minutes

25  I would wait in congestion  
9-12 minutes

8  I would wait in congestion  
more than 12 minutes

## Causes of Congestion

1. What do you think are the causes of congestion you see on a typical day of travel? (check all that apply)

(% Respondents)

86  Too many cars

77  Accidents

69  Merging onto roadway

8  Discourteous drivers

62  Too many driveways

38  Too many signals

15  Poor access to desired destination

46  Poorly timed signals

8  Other: Poor detection technique by  
emergency personnel

(% Respondents)

31  Debris in roadway

23  Changing lanes

46  Exiting off of roadway

77  No alternative routes

54  Road construction

23  Truck traffic

46  Lack of transit service

69  Broken down automobiles or distractions causing "rubber-necking"

1. Incidents are any event which can divert driver's attention and disrupt the normal flow of traffic, including many of the things we just previously discussed like rubbernecking, debris in the roadway, etc. When you are traveling, how often does an incident cause congestion or delay your trip? (check only one)

(% Respondents)

8  Less than once a month

17  About one or two times a month

(% Respondents)

42  About once a week

33  More than once a week

## ***Solutions to Congestion***

1. What do you think would help to address congestion problems? (check up to five)

(% Respondents)

- 46  Widen existing roadways
- 38  Improve transit service
- 69  Improve incident management
- 31  Safer merging condition

- 15  Improve roadways signing
- 23  Reserve lanes for HOV's
- 15  Transit/Carpool Park and Ride lots
- 0  Telecommuting
- 23  Reduce number of driveway accesses
- 31  Other:

- 1) Remove unwarranted control devices such as stop signs, speed bumps, etc.
- 2) Increase driveway spacing requirements
- 3) Better planning so people live closer to where they work
- 4) Quick detection, response, and removal

(% Respondents)

- 23  Timely removal of debris in roadway
- 38  Improve signal timing and control
- 0  Limiting truck traffic
- 31  Safer exiting conditions ("exit only" lanes, etc.)
- 15  Improved roadway striping/markings/signs
- 23  Ridesharing (carpool) program
- 0  Some higher parking costs
- 31  Variable work schedules
- 23  Remove unwarranted signals
- 15  More roadways
- 0  Toll facility

1. Select options you would not accept during your commute, on roads you frequently travel and/or near your home or business. (check up to five)

(% Respondents)

- 8  Widen existing roadways
- 23  Improve transit service
- 0  Improve incident management
- 0  Safer merging conditions
- 0  Improve roadway signing
- 15  Reserve lanes for HOV's
- 15  Transit/carpool park and ride lots
- 0  Telecommuting
- 8  Reduce number of driveway access

(% Respondents)

- 0  Timely removal of debris in roadway
- 0  Improve signal timing and control
- 8  Limiting truck traffic
- 0  Safer exiting conditions ("exit only" lanes)
- 0  Improved roadway striping/markings/signs
- 15  Ridesharing (carpool) program
- 23  Some/higher parking costs
- 15  Variable work schedules
- 0  Remove unwarranted signals

(% Respondents)

8  Other:

Addition of politically motivated control devices such as unwarranted signals, stop signs, speed bumps, etc.

(% Respondents)

8  More roadways

69  Toll facility

***Institutional Challenges (for this section, please see the attached summary.)***

1. What types of institutional barriers do you think might hamper the development of congestion management strategies?

2. Do you think elected officials, community groups and local jurisdiction staff along the corridors will support congestion management strategies?

69  Yes                      31  No

If no, what groups and why? THESE FOUR (4) RESPONSES WERE NOT SPECIFIC.

3. What steps do you think jurisdictions and other public agencies can take to assist in the development and promotions of congestion management strategies?

***Institutional Barriers:***

- Multiple jurisdictions of roadways, too many local government jurisdictions - Many agencies and jurisdictions involved including state, municipalities, and counties.
- Bureaucracy in transportation management and funding.
- Reluctance of individuals to utilize mass transit until congestion problems become critical.
- Birmingham's fear of urban sprawl.
- Financial constraints or costs, answer is dependent on strategies.
- Lack of cooperation with corporate sector and between the different governments, i.e., City, County, State.
- Politics, greed, exorbitant cost and plans.