

*Analysis of Qualitative Research
Conducted with Coloradans
Regarding Traffic Congestion*

Conducted in May 2006

*On Behalf of
Colorado Department of Transportation*

*By
PBS&J and Public Opinion Strategies*



PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

Table of Contents

1) Executive Summary	3
2) Methodology	4
3) Key Findings	
• Traffic Congestion Affects Everyday Life/ is Concern	5
• Defining Traffic Congestion	7
• Measuring Traffic Congestion	11
• Priorities in Alleviating Traffic Congestion and Importance of Information in Reducing Stress	13
• Views on Mass Transit as an Option	16
• Assessment of CDOT and Understanding of Funding Issues in Alleviating Traffic Congestion	18
4) Addendum of Respondent Exercises	21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PBS&J and Public Opinion Strategies (consultants) conducted six focus group studies on behalf of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) regarding perceptions of traffic congestion. The focus groups were held in the following locations and dates:

Fort Collins	May 4, 2006
Denver	May 15, 2006
Grand Junction	May 18, 2006
Pueblo	May 21, 2006
Colorado Springs	May 22, 2006

Two groups were conducted in Denver: one group consisted of individuals who do not commute to work (homemakers, retirees, and students who may commute to school, but not during traditional rush hour times); the second group consisted of individuals who commute to work.

Residents of Colorado are concerned about traffic congestion which they feel affects the quality of their life and their emotional well-being. Respondents in this focus group study are taking a number of steps to avoid congested areas or congested times of day.

Coloradans measure traffic based on four factors: how it makes them feel, time delays, the number of cars on the road and their perception of safety. The “how it makes them feel” is the most accurate predictor as it encompasses the other three factors. Measuring traffic congestion based on some combination of factors would be the best option based on the input from these groups.

There are some concerns about the quality and emotional temperament of other drivers on the road. An emphasis on driver education and courtesy by the state would be greatly appreciated and would lead to a reduction in the “stress” drivers feel while in traffic congestion.

Most participants do not feel public transportation is a viable option for them personally, although they like the concept of more mass transit if it is reasonably priced and efficient. Drivers appear to feel CDOT is in a reactive stance, rather than a proactive stance looking at the future of transportation in the state. Drivers perceive mass transit as the “future.”

Respondents are extremely positive toward ITS information systems which lowers their “stress levels” when they encounter congestion. Combining the fact that frustration is a key measure of traffic, and information dramatically reduces frustration, providing timely and accurate information should be a key CDOT goal.

While there is a widespread sense that CDOT is doing what it can with limited resources, there are drastically varied reactions to tolling. This was not a central focus of this research, so clearly other research on this issue would be better able to understand what triggers this disparity in initial views of tolls. However, it is clear that drivers can have drastically different views of the concept of tolling as well as their specific experience with toll roads such as E-470.

As this was a qualitative assessment to understand how Coloradans think and feel about traffic congestion, a quantitative survey could be an appropriate next step to reinforce and/or confirm these findings and quantify some of the regional issues and other distinctions which are suggested.

METHODOLOGY

All respondents were licensed drivers and randomly selected for participation. They were screened to ensure that the groups broadly represented the overall population of that region by age, gender, and represented different parts of that area. Respondents were also screened to ensure that no one was employed in any industry related to roads or transit, and that they had lived in that area for at least two years so they had some understanding of local transportation issues.

The goals of this focus group research were to:

1. EXPLORE Coloradans' views of traffic and congestion levels, including differences in perceptions of peak and off-peak travel;
2. GAUGE tolerance of traffic congestion;
3. ASSESS perceptions of CDOT efforts to alleviate traffic congestion;
4. UNDERSTAND how the level of traffic affects Coloradans and their lifestyle decisions, including where they live, driving behavior and recreational driving decisions;
5. ASSESS the value of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) information systems and incident impact reduction efforts and awareness of real-time traffic information among drivers; and
6. EXPLORE how the availability of alternative modes of transportation influences travel choices.

As in any focus group study, the goal of this project is a *qualitative* assessment of the subject. As such, comments cannot be projected to the total population, as is the case if we were to conduct a *quantitative* survey among Colorado residents. In other words, we *cannot* claim the views and opinions of focus group participants in this project match the entire universe of Coloradans. Therefore, we focus less on specific counts/tallies of respondents' exercises, and more on broad observations of the language respondents use in the conversation. Similarly, given the small number of focus groups, this report does not place emphasis on regional variations. Those would have to be verified in a quantitative survey, if so desired.

Further, this report cannot accurately detail the wealth of information to be found in the non-verbal area, such as body language, or the amount of time lapsed between questions from the moderator and actual responses from the group. This summary also cannot report on the subtle area of peer pressure, the willingness to avoid offering a particular response because of the fear of what others might think, or to change a response when others in the group appear to oppose their original position.

In order, to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents, they are referred to in this report only by gender. This report's addendum includes a compilation of all respondent exercises.

KEY FINDINGS

Traffic Congestion Affects Everyday Life and is a Concern

- In all groups, we began the discussion by allowing participants to self-generate their overall concerns by asking them to write down the one or two most important problems facing their local area. Respondents wrote their top one or two issues down, so this generation of ideas would not be biased by the responses of others. While the number of responses which focus on transportation may have been artificially heightened by respondents knowing beforehand that the main topic of the groups was related to “driving,” it is still evident that traffic congestion is a top-of-mind concern in every area of the state. Moreover, growth is a closely related concern and one that “goes together” with traffic congestion. However, these issues are in a mix of other concerns for their local area.
- Traffic congestion cannot be separated from concerns about growth. They are often mentioned simultaneously or in the same breath.

“The traffic we're seeing is not just because we're growing. It's because Montrose, Delta, all these other surrounding communities are growing. On the weekend, you go out to the mall, and everybody is coming in from all over to shop. That's fine, but with growth, I think, you have to manage it. You can't just throw up . . . boom, you know.” – Grand Junction man

“You used to be able to get across town in 15 minutes from one end to the other. Now it takes half an hour at least, and it's, everybody wants to grow big like Springs or Denver. If they want to go that big, go to Springs or Denver. Leave Pueblo alone. It's fine.” – Pueblo woman

“When I see growth, I see congestion with all the cars, and all the houses being built, and then tempers flare up . . . gets hot in the summer and more accidents on the roads. I really think that they need to do something more with zoning laws and plan things out a little bit better. Like he said, have natural spaces or at least have parks, and bicycle paths, and areas where they can . . . I've seen a lot of people in this town that are handicapped. They can't even cross the street. I think there should be more accommodation to people like that, other people too, and older people.” – Grand Junction woman

- Congestion is certainly affecting daily life among most respondents.

“Traffic congestion makes me agitated and stresses me out. Sitting through two lights with a screaming child in the back seat would take years off of anybody's life.” – Fort Collins woman

“Traffic congestion affects my life negatively. Frustration at stop and go and dangerous conditions on I-25 has affected my blood pressure. I think it is taking way too long to get needed improvements.” – Fort Collins man

“The congestion angers and frustrates me and in turn can affect how I feel and react during the whole day.” – Denver man

- Respondents indicate a number of different coping techniques or decisions they have made based solely on traffic congestion. These include:
 - Bundling errands or activities;
 - Running errands, such as grocery shopping or going to the mall, at “off peak” times;
 - Learning different routes and alternatives;
 - Leaving earlier to get to certain places;
 - Avoiding certain streets or areas;
 - Not going for certain recreational activities (e.g. to the mountains or to Denver) as frequently or feeling like they have to spend the night or come back at less often traveled times;
 - Planning ahead to accomplish a few tasks;
 - Avoiding major events where they know there will be traffic congestion; and
 - Using mass transit or bicycling occasionally, particularly among Denver area respondents for sporting or other events.

The more dramatic coping mechanisms which respondents have employed are:

- Changing their job to have a shorter commute; or
- Choosing the location of their home in less congested areas.

So, for example, respondents describe their coping mechanisms like this:

“I think the frustrating thing, I mean, it has gotten to where you run out, and you do an errand, and by the time you get back, you're wiped out . . . years past, you would have just gotten back in the car, and gone out, and done it. Now, you go, oh, I'll do that tomorrow. I'm not getting out there again.” – Grand Junction man

“You see, I never go to Taste of Colorado or any of the events downtown because I say, oh, the traffic, why bother?” – Denver woman

“I have very strategic. . . I mean, I'll sit there, and I'll plan side streets and everything else on earth or, you know, I will do that. Well, then that's one thing that is good about Denver is that if you really work out, you can figure out things.” – Denver woman

“I always plan ahead so that I get somewhere early because I am paranoid about being late.” – Fort Collins woman

“I take back roads all the time to get places. It's peace of mind.” – Grand Junction man

“I'll give you an example. I don't ski on the weekends. I just ski during the week because I get up to the ski areas very quickly on I-70. I wouldn't even, unless, I don't know, if somebody I knew that maybe took a trip here and was only going to ski on the weekend, I might go. But because I know that sitting in all of that for hours just to go skiing, to me, is insane, so I just, I plan around that. I just don't ski anymore, except for during the week, or if I can go up on a weekend, I'd leave on a Friday morning and come back on a Monday morning.” – Denver woman

“There's a number of times when we've come back from Denver, there's been a wreck like at the top of Colorado Springs, and it's like, you know, how are you going to get around this mess? And we've resorted to pulling out maps and looking to see if there are alternate routes sometimes... or called my kids and got them on the Internet.” -- Pueblo woman

- It is interesting that a couple of respondents across the groups describe driving today as a “competition.” While it is not a common theme, it is an interesting take on what many others describe, but do not analyze in this same manner.

“...everybody is out there, and the experience is usually competitive. If it is traffic, somebody is in your way, and we have rules to try to keep us in line. And now and then, people break the rules, but there is competition in terms of getting to the lake first, or this place in line, or whatnot. And then there is also what kind of car that you drive, and who you are, and your image in your vehicle, and all that stuff.” – Fort Collins man

- Coloradans in these groups fear that as traffic worsens that their quality of life will be even more negatively affected. The worst things they can see occurring as traffic congestion escalates are that:
 - There will be more road rage and more negative incidents;
 - There will be more accidents and people hurt; and
 - It will negatively affect Colorado’s economy as employers will not want to locate in the state or will not be able to attract employees to live in such a congested area.
- Road rage or “road rudeness” as one Grand Junction woman called it, deserves special mention as it is very top-of-mind for respondents and part of their overall “image” of traffic congestion.

“I think about [when picturing traffic congestion] a hot, sweaty day and . . . my air conditioner isn't working . . . tempers are just . . .they are flipping each other off and screaming. In fact, today was just horrible for me in the traffic. There were a few times where I got stuck for a few lights. People were obviously in a big hurry around noon to get to where they were going. Obviously, they're not leaving in enough time. I also feel like sometimes I'm not even in Grand Junction anymore. It's like I've moved to Denver, especially on that First and Grand and I-70B. That's where I was today, and it was terrible there, terrible.” – Grand Junction woman

Defining Traffic Congestion

The focus groups sought to help better understand how Coloradans in these areas view and define traffic. The groups explored issues such as when traffic congestion occurs, where it occurs, what causes it, and how they would define it.

- Notably, “traffic” is the common term used to describe congestion. Traffic is perceived as a negative and is commonly used in place of “traffic congestion” to mean the same thing. Many respondents continue to use the terms interchangeably throughout a discussion of the issue, although after probing some recognize that “traffic” can mean varying levels, only some of which is “congested.” This common language usage is very important to recognize, since saying “traffic” often describes a negative state of the roads for many Coloradans.

“It’s the same for me too. Traffic, traffic congestion is one and the same.” – Denver woman

- When asked to provide a “Webster’s Dictionary definition” of traffic, respondents tend to provide two main types of definitions:

1. A fairly neutral and more accurate definition of traffic comes from a minority of respondents which focuses on movement of cars along a route. For example:

“Defines the movement of vehicles (i.e. cars, trucks, vans, semis in designated areas); traffic is controlled by use of stop signs, signals, yield signs, etc. to assure a fair amount of movement throughout a day and night.” – Pueblo

“Noun; A word denoting the general speed, number of vehicles, accidents and other facets regarding on a road an area and the ability to travel through that area.” – Denver

“Vehicles on public roadways navigating other vehicles, side streets, lights, signs, pedestrians and bicycles in an effort to go from Point A to Point B.” – Fort Collins

This definition is more accurate as the actual pertinent definition for “traffic” from Merriam-Webster’s Online dictionary is “**a** : the movement (as of vehicles or pedestrians) through an area or along a route **b** : the vehicles, pedestrians, ships, or planes moving along a route.”

2. The more common definition is one that refers to traffic in its more common usage as synonymous with congestion. Respondents often refer to the number of cars, speed, safety, and their feelings about it (the four ways in which drivers measure congestion as explained later) often in the same definition. None of these appears more frequently than the others enough times to be able to point to one as the dominant frame of reference for drivers.

“Long lines of bumper to bumper traffic, red lights, stopped cars, road rage, rush hour accidents; causes anger, frustration, sense of urgency to get to your destination; also pollution and gas.” – Fort Collins

“Cars with limited space between them having to slow due to acceleration and deceleration durations which creates a direct influence on motion of cars up the road bottlenecking.” – Colorado Springs

“Noun: traf’ fik, A hold-up or drastic slow-down in the normal flow of vehicles, either on a highway or a street; the result of anything that causes an impediment in the flow of vehicles.” – Pueblo

“Non-stop cars moving at a snail’s pace with people trying anyway to go faster even if it means breaking the law.” – Denver

- Traffic congestion is also defined in terms of physical senses:

Sight: Respondents discuss seeing endless taillights in front of them or a near claustrophobia from being surrounded by so many cars that there is no way to “escape.”

Smell: Exhaust from cars and being so close to other cars that cigarette smoke drifts to where they can smell it.

“The smell of somebody in front of me that’s smoking . . .(I’m) in Colorado, I love the fresh air, and I drive with the window open, and I’m smelling somebody else’s smoke. It absolutely drives me nuts. I hate that.” – Denver

Sound: Honking cars and being so close to other cars that one can hear their radio

- In order to understand how respondents define “bad traffic” it is helpful to know how they define “good traffic.” A positive experience on the roads tends to focus on flowing traffic that allows one to get to the destination in less than the average time, with courteous drivers on the roadways. Witness this exchange in the Denver commuters’ group when asked to describe a “perfect transportation experience:”

WOMAN: *“You have all green lights.”*

MAN: *“You get up at 5:00, you drive in, and there’s nobody around.”*

WOMAN: *“Driving the speed limit.”*

MAN: *“There’s plenty of space on the roads...two car lengths...”*

MAN: *“Few cars on the road, easy flow in and out.”*

WOMAN: *“The sun is shining.”*

MAN: *“Not rushing.”*

WOMAN: *“No black ice.”*

MAN: *“Yes, I was just going to say good weather conditions.”*

WOMAN: *“Nobody next to you with the thud, thud, thud of their stereo.”*

- When does traffic congestion occur? Traffic congestion is viewed differently depending on one’s driving habits and location.
 1. First, everyone recognizes there is a rush hour which is “always” congested. Rush hour is never defined as being one hour. Rush hour is perceived as anywhere from 5:30-9:00AM in the morning and 3:00-6:30PM in the evening. The shortest ranges were in Grand Junction and Pueblo, where responses varies but were closer to a two hour period of time.
 2. Moreover, respondents also tend to perceive a “lunch time” traffic congestion time period in many locations along local roads or certain areas (i.e. the Tech Center) as many workers go out to lunch.
 3. In many cases, respondents view traffic as “constant.”

“Well, the traffic, the traffic is horrendous. When I was driving before, you’d get on the highway, and there’d be nobody on there. At late nights, there’d be nobody at all. You’d go for miles and not see anybody. Now, I-25 corridor is full just like in the day all night long.” – Pueblo man

“There’s no break time. It’s constant...It’s not that it’s busy from 7:30 to 9:00 when people are going to work, or for the lunch hour, or from 5:00. At 2:00, in the middle of the afternoon, it’s congested.” – Grand Junction woman

- It is important to recognize that respondents generally find traffic at some points during the day – typically a shorter period of time than what they currently define as rush hour – to be acceptable. In other words, they expect and will accept some congestion when people are getting to work and children are getting to school. This period of time that people say is acceptable ranges from zero hours to four hours to six hours of congestion per day in Denver.

“People have to get to work. I mean, you know, they have to get to work, and they have to get to school. Any community, I don't care if you are Grand Junction or Montrose, or whatever, you've got to make some allowances. Myself, I leave a little earlier, just in case I get caught up in something stupid. It's going to happen. You've got to make allowances for people to get to work and kids to get to school.” – Grand Junction man

- Where is traffic congestion? Respondents tend to differ on whether traffic congestion is more likely to be on highways or local roads. They can readily describe certain streets or intersections (interestingly locations of Wal-Marts come up as examples several times) which are congested, just as often as generically discussing traffic on a highway. Notably, they do not tend to react to or feel differently toward traffic congestion based on where they encounter it. Congestion on a highway or congestion on a local thoroughfare elicits essentially the same response.
- How does traffic congestion make them feel? Frustration is by far the most commonly elicited emotion. Across the groups, there are at least some respondents who describe anger and extreme stress as an outcome of being in traffic congestion. A certain level of hyper-awareness of other drivers and being always on watch for danger and accidents also tends to come up. Respondents completed an exercise in which they selected a picture from a number of emotive facial expressions as the one they would feel like. These pictures really do convey more than their words about the “Oh no! Here we go again” feeling they frequently describe.
- Traffic congestion is not considered “bad” until it gets to Level of Service F by most drivers. Respondents were shown photos representing the different Levels of Service in order and asked their reaction and emotions at each level. Levels of Service A-D are generally viewed complacently. In most cases, a photo of Level of Service F is the only level which elicits a sense that this is problematic traffic. Moreover, some say that conditions in reality are often far worse than depicted in the Level of Service F photo.
- The most commonly perceived causes of traffic congestion include:
 - Growth/more people on the roads;
 - Accidents;
 - Poor drivers;
 - Cell phones (which cause accidents);
 - Not enough planning or foresight in infrastructure/ roads not wide enough;
 - Not enough planning in terms of where development is allowed to occur;
 - People living farther from work;
 - Traditional work schedules requiring too many people on the roads at the same time;
 - Lack of convenient, effective mass transit options;
 - Tourists/people not familiar with area slowing down;
 - Trucks;
 - Events, such as sporting events, concerts, or community events; and
 - Weather.

“You've got commuters. You've got people who are already at work driving trucks. You've got Halliburton. You've got all these other oil . . . now, and you just have got a mass of different stuff, and it's slowing it down. A semi takes a lot longer to get started to go through that cycle when he's at a dead stop. It causes a backup.” – Grand Junction man

Measuring Traffic Congestion

- The whole concept of measuring traffic is fairly foreign to respondents. They view it as “semantics” and not focused on solving the problem. Most think some sort of study of “traffic congestion” by the various factors is already taking place.

“You're looking for the numbers of cars that aren't going, the stop and go. You're looking at traffic, you're looking at what the 9 News helicopter looks at every morning when she drives over, Tonya Hoffman, or whatever her name is, that gives that little report. You know, so you start doing studies... Aerial studies to see where are the major problems. I can't imagine that they haven't done that.” – Denver woman

- “Travel time delay” is seen as a reasonable way to speak about congestion, although their initial reaction to the phrase is negative. That is because they focus on the word “delay,” which has immediate negative connotations. Notably, respondents have differing tolerance for specific minutes (for example a 20 minute travel time delay can seem like “just a delay” to some and fairly unreasonable to others).
- However, respondents universally want CDOT to be trying to *reduce* travel time delays, rather than maintaining travel time delays. There is a sense that not at least trying to reduce delays is “throwing in the towel.” Only one person really caught the implication that with growth and increased congestion, maintaining delays may be true progress over time.
- When probed during the discussion it is fairly clear that there are four chief ways in which respondents measure congestion.
 1. Stress levels or how it makes the driver feel. The number of cars driving around them, the speed and behavior of other drivers on the roads (aggressive driving is a prominent theme), trying to avoid accidents, or the sinking feeling when they see bumper-to-bumper, slowing traffic ahead of them which could make them late, all leads to a certain level of stress and anxiety. Therefore, “bad traffic” appears to be measured by emotions and stress, more so than by a quantitative measure of the number of accidents or the time it takes to get from Point A to Point B.

“So I'm trying to think, well, what time do I need to leave, what's efficient so I'm not spending a lot of time just hanging around. But you can never depend on what it's going to be because, you know, there are days you can get on and you can just go. And then there are days where, you know, it could take twice as long. So that, to me, is what, you know, produces sort of the stress and the anxiety.” – Denver woman

“When you're sitting there, and your car is idling, and you're waiting for the stoplight to turn green to go again, a lot of people just sit there and think, oh, my gas tank. You can just see the gas going out of your car. The fumes are just going, and you're thinking, oh, and the gas prices. You look up, and you see how the gas prices have gone up since yesterday. You're just like, oh.” – Grand Junction woman

“You see a big pile of cars for miles on end right ahead of you, and you say, oh, I've got to be there in five minutes, and there's no way I'm going to get through this in five minutes. It's just aggravating. It makes you mad. And people are just cutting people off, just stupid mistakes of traffic. People are ignorant. It's just too much congestion, and it causes people to get mad.” – Pueblo man

“I think it's just impatience to get from Point A to Point B. I know our generation is instant gratification, so you want to be there now. They don't plan properly, and so you get impatient, or you're running late because your two-year-old was delayed with whatever, you know. I think it's just you want to get where you're going and be there right now.” – Denver woman

2. Delay. Clearly, the time spent getting from Point A to Point B is one of the more top-of-mind ways in which drivers measure traffic congestion.

“The traffic has gotten heavier, and you don't know how long it's going to take you to make it through a light, or when you're going to be able to turn into the next intersection, like onto Grand Avenue, or how many lights you might get. Even the timing of the lights seems to be different than they used to be.... I feel frustrated because...I know my friend gets really aggravated when she sits and waits for me . . . ten minutes. . . I'm just racing over there as fast as I can go. I end up showing up, and 'here I am.' 'Why did it take so long?’” – Grand Junction woman

“...if someone asks you how's traffic, my response is going to be either good, if I'm making good time, I'm making like average progress as far as the journey would take, or bad if it's taking me a lot longer than I expected, either because of traffic, construction, whatever. So like how long it takes you to make that journey is what denotes good or bad traffic.” – Denver man

3. Safety. Safety can be measured by the number of accidents or red light runners, etc., but it also encompasses the drivers' feelings of safety on the road. This is what respondents in the Fort Collins focus group referred to as the “NASCAR mentality” of traffic congestion on I-25, but is a common concern across the groups. This is also linked to the frequently expressed concern about poor drivers, such as people driving 45 in the passing lane or those who do not know how to merge, etc.

“If you drive I-25, you are bumper to bumper going 80 miles an hour. And there are three lanes of it, and people are changing lanes . . . there are people who shouldn't be out there because they are trying to do 45 in the right-hand lane, and everybody is doing 80. They are on vacation or whatever when everybody is trying to get to work. It looks like NASCAR out there.” – Fort Collins man

“I think there are a lot of people out there that are frustrated with the drive and the time, and potentially it can lead to some reckless behavior, crossing the lanes, not signaling, doing things that are risky to themselves and to other people.” – Denver respondent

“(Traffic is) a bunch of people trying to get to places in motorized vehicles; some obey the law, some break it. Drive at your own risk. Good luck.” – Pueblo man defining traffic (as example of the concern over safety)

4. Density. Many respondents also focus on the number of cars on the road squeezed tightly together. For example, the Fort Collins group had this exchange about their mental image of traffic:

WOMAN: *“Lots of cars.”*

MODERATOR: *“How many cars?”*

WOMAN: *“Well, you’ve got three lanes there.”*

MAN: *“Bumper to bumper, too.”*

WOMAN: *“Gridlock.”*

WOMAN: *“And it is stopped there.”*

“(Traffic is) totally congested areas crowded with cars and usually not enough street space to accommodate all of them....In an area not big enough to accommodate all of them.” – Grand Junction woman

Priorities in Alleviating Traffic Congestion and Importance of Information in Alleviating Stress

- Movement is a priority. Respondents would far rather be moving – even slowly moving – than be stuck in stop-and-go traffic.

“I think you feel like you’re getting somewhere if you’re moving steady, I mean, even if it’s 20 miles an hour.” – Denver man

“Well, when I’m ...leaving to go home, if I don’t take the light rail, I have to flip to radio stations to get the traffic reports to know where the accidents are, or where the road closures are, where it’s slow. Even though it may take me a little bit out of my way, I just want to be able to go and drive the speed limit, keep moving.” – Denver woman

“I mean, there could be a lot of traffic. If they’re moving, and I’m just going, and I’m making some good progress, you know, then it is okay with me, I don’t care if all of those other people are on the road too... If it’s bumper to bumper, stop and go, stop and go, stop and go, that’s what’s irritating.” – Denver woman

- Reliability of congestion is important as it plays into their own time management. Respondents feel reliability is even more important in the morning if traveling to work because they “have” to get there to get the day started.

“That’s time management, being able to say I can get up at this time in the morning because I have to do this, this, and this to be to work at this time. And in the evening to say, okay, I’m leaving work at this time, and I want to be home at this time because I want dinner, and I have this to do, and I have this place to go, and to schedule your evening outside of work. So the time management piece, I like to know within a couple of minutes of each other, okay, is it going to take me this long to get to work or not? Can I hit the snooze button one more time or not?” -- Fort Collins woman

“If you’re driving to work, and you’re trying to get there on time, or a doctor’s appointment, or something, you have to leave like two hours before you’ve got to be there because you might be there on time. It’s supposed to take only 45 minutes from Pueblo to Springs, but you never know on traffic. You can’t count on traffic, so you have to leave two hours ahead of time to make sure

you have extra time.... for instance, the other day, I had to take my mom to a doctor's appointment in Colorado Springs. . . we had to be at the hospital at 9:30, so we left here at 7:30 to make blooming sure that we would get there on time because it was going to be during rush hour and stuff. Well, lo and behold, for a change, the traffic was pretty decent, got there at 8:30. But if we had left at 8:30 instead, we wouldn't have gotten there until probably 10:30. You just can't count on it.” – Pueblo woman

- However, reliability can be just as critical for “leisure” trips.

“I was going to a wedding outside of Denver two weekends ago, and there was an accident right past the X exit. We had given ourselves plenty of time, but all of the sudden, it stopped. And I thought, man, if I am going to be late for this wedding, and it is some idiot or something like that, I was really ticked. When I saw that it was actually a rollover, I said, oh. And I knew how far, once we got to the top of the hill, and I could see that there it is, then I calmed down. I'm not going to get into an accident. It is not that far away. I'm not going to be sitting in this until . . . and it was important for me to know that just for my stress level, if it was going to be from the X exit, to Longmont, or beyond because I was going to be late for my wedding.” – Fort Collins woman

“So I'm trying to think, well, what time do I need to leave, what's efficient so I'm not spending a lot of time just hanging around. But you can never depend on what it's going to be because, you know, there are days you can get on and you can just go. And then there are days where, you know, it could take twice as long. So that, to me, is what, you know, produces sort of the stress and the anxiety.” – Denver woman

- In light of that, knowing what to expect – how long the delay might be or the cause of the delay – helps to manage emotions and makes them feel better. ITS information systems are viewed extremely positively, as it helps them manage their “stress.” They clearly want to know as far in advance as possible what to expect. This exchange in Denver is illustrative:

MAN: *“It gives more understanding of what's going on, and you know what to prepare for. You know that you're going to be here for 30 minutes or 45 minutes. If you know, it just helps prepare you for it.”*

WOMAN: *“You have an alternative to get off the road, take another route.”*

MAN: *“If you know you're going to miss your meeting, or you're going to miss dinner, you can plan for it, as opposed to the unknown of how long it's going to take me to get home.”*

- There are only a few mentions of the CDOT web site information and on-line cameras as a way to have more information regarding traffic congestion. However, there is a concern that you really need the information after you are on the road driving and cannot check the Internet.

“You can get on the Internet and see what all of the signs have to say.” – Fort Collins man

- Synchronized lights are a positive to drivers. There is some limited concern that during “rush hour,” lights seem better synchronized than at other times of day. There is a sense that light synchronization would be ideal any time.

“...if I hit all of the green lights, that could mean it is going to be a great day.” – Fort Collins woman

“The traffic lights are a bigger problem to me than the traffic itself because there's no synchronization of the traffic lights in Pueblo. They say, oh, it costs too much to do it. You know, how much does it cost?” – Pueblo man

- Driver education on the “rules of the road” and emphasizing common courtesy would certainly alleviate some concerns and stress related to traffic congestion. While certainly drivers have a tendency to view themselves as “good” drivers and others as inferior, this concern about driver etiquette and education comes up frequently. Witness this exchange among male respondents in Pueblo:

MAN: *“Doesn't matter how big or perfect the roads are if you've got a bunch of idiots on them. You've got to have better drivers.”*

MAN: *“Yeah, that is true. Last time I was in California, I noticed that the distance everybody kept from each other was a lot greater, and it's a lot easier drive, maneuver around, in and out and stuff. And here it's just tailgating and you can't do anything, so I think education.”*

MAN: *“Even in Denver, you're bumper to bumper, but if you use your signal, they'll make a spot, you move over, you get out of their way and they keep on moving. Around here, people are driving with their thumb up their nose in the fast lane and, you know, they've got nowhere to be or something.”*

MAN: *“Well, actually, that would be education of the police then because you only see them after the speeders or profiling people. If they would be going after more legitimate traffic offenses, you know, illegal turns, take the right of way, tailgating, things like that. I mean, we started this new policy that roadside hazard or whatever, driving aggressively and things like that. I think we need to start looking at doing that more. I mean, I've been sitting at a red light and seen people just run right by a cop right there, oh well.”*

- By far the most frequently cited concern about drivers not understanding the rules of the road that affects traffic congestion is a “slow” driver in the left lane.

“It is just being around the cars that just makes me agitated. I get frustrated when I am surrounded by people, especially people who are in the far left-hand lane that are going five miles an hour under the speed limit. That is the most frustrating thing in the world.” – Fort Collins woman

Views on Mass Transit and Impact on Transportation Choices

- Across the groups, several respondents have either tried to use or occasionally use public transportation. Most do not feel they realistically have the “option” of public transportation for a variety of reasons including:
 - Location of child care/work;
 - Hours of operation;
 - Even longer travel times if they take mass transit;
 - Expense, or
 - Availability of parking at Park-n-Rides

“I used to ride the bus all of the time. I have classes in the evening, so since they stopped the night bus, I basically don’t ride the bus anymore. I need to drive to school because I’m not going to ride my bike in the dark.” – Fort Collins man

“I know that trying to get from, well, there is a route from Boulder to Denver, but if you want to get to Boulder to South Denver, you have to take three or four different buses, which isn’t worth your time. It takes four hours versus the 45 minutes because you have the bus schedule.” – Denver woman

“I tried to look at the bus system schedule when I moved there thinking that it would be cool, but it doesn’t go to a lot of places.” – Fort Collins woman

“I love the bus system. I take it often from Brookfield from a Park and Ride in, I think, North Platte to downtown. I think it’s a great system. The parking, however, is a problem. I’ve had numerous times when I’ve gone to park, and there’s not one spot anywhere in the lot. That’s really a downfall, and it’s becoming quite a problem for a lot of people. So what we’re finding is we’re pulling in and carpooling down, and just leaving the bus because there’s nowhere to park, and there’s too many signs around that they’ll tow us, so that’s an issue. I use it probably two times a week, and it’s a problem, a very big problem. I would love to see a big parking structure down there to use the bus.” – Denver woman

“I live out west in Golden, and I go to Boulder every day. I work in Boulder. So your choices are either Route 93 or you go up 36. I don’t really live near 36, so that’s kind of out there. Thirty-six has six lanes, and it’s always backed up, it’s always a mess. Ninety-three is two lanes. You actually travel pretty well, but in the wintertime, it’s really treacherous. I originally started taking the bus. The bus sucks. It takes an hour and a half for me on the bus. The bus stops right in front of my house and goes into Boulder to my work . . . but it’s much easier for me to take my chances and go up 93 in my car, even if I don’t like it because the winds are blowing and the snow is blizzarding. If they had something that was a more efficient way of taking the bus, plus it’s very expensive. It’s like \$103 a month for a bus pass because it’s considered regional. I’m not going to spend that. I don’t spend that on my car even with gas being \$3 a gallon, so it’s not worth it to me to do that. They talked about light rail coming to Golden, but I’m going to be retired by the time that happens, so that’s not going to do me any good.” – Denver woman

- Some drivers in the Denver groups view mass transit and light rail as a better option for attending events. They laud the convenience of it for sporting events in particular, because the stops are so close to the venues.

- There is a *strong* sense that some sort of mass transit rail along the Front Range ought to be considered. In addition, the Grand Junction group also mentioned some sort of rail from the Front Range up into the mountains as their experience with traffic on highways tends to be along I-70 toward Denver. While respondents may support adding lanes on certain areas or highways, they also clearly feel that adding lanes along highways will only be filled by more people. Therefore, five of the six groups mention mass transit as a solution that ought to be developed. They recognize it as expensive, but think this is “the future” and is planning ahead. This exchange among Denver non-commuters is a good example of the typical dialogue on this issue:

MAN: *“Look at all the . . . projects, make sure that the supposed benefit of them is actually going to be seen. Because what’s the point of dumping all them into, you know, T-REX if, by the time it’s completed, it’s still going to be . . .”*

WOMAN: *“A problem.”*

MAN: *“Yeah.”*

MODERATOR: *“So would we add lanes, would we add lanes to highways?”*

MAN: *“I don’t see what you gain in that.”*

WOMAN: *“I don’t see, I mean, if . . .”*

WOMAN: *“Well, the T-REX thing is already a fact. They say as soon as that’s done, it’s going to be overcrowded again.”*

WOMAN: *“I think they need to plan further ahead than five or ten years. I mean, I think you need to look at the planning. If, like today, look at the planning to see if the current influx of people is as is, project that out.”*

- That being said, Coloradans don’t just want any system. They want mass transit that is efficient and reasonably priced as an alternative to driving.

“I think we’ve gone through this whole new T-REX project, you know, it’s gone very well and whatever. But we need a transportation system that will move people around this city. We’re like Los Angeles sort of, I think, where there isn’t a mass transit system like New York or San Francisco, or ways to move people around that are efficient and effective. That’s why I don’t think a lot of people even take the mass transit that we have because I don’t think it’s efficient. Whereas, you go to a city like New York, you can get on the subway, you can go anywhere you want to go, get off, and you’re there. You don’t need a car there. You need a car here.”

“I agree with her, totally. You take it, and you’re like stuck whatever points they have. You can’t go west or east, it doesn’t seem like, just north and south, from Littleton anyway.” – Denver woman

Assessment of CDOT and Understanding of Funding Issues in Alleviating Traffic Congestion

- CDOT is generally viewed as doing what it can, given limited resources. “CDOT is underfunded and overworked” is the general impression of most respondents.

“They're doing good. I think they're doing good. . . They probably don't have enough money.” – Colorado Spring man

“For what they have, they're doing the best that they can.” – Denver woman

“I'd hire a lobbyist, get into that Senate and House of Representatives until, bug them until the money, the tax money got pulled into my department for this, that, and the other, and I could cite other stories and tell them.” -- Pueblo man when asked what he would do if in charge of alleviating traffic congestion for CDOT

Across several groups, TREX is viewed as the main thing that CDOT is spending funds on at this time. This impacts their view of CDOT's ability to pay for other projects, as seen in this exchange among Denver drivers:

WOMAN: *“I think they're strapped.”*

MAN: *“I do too, with the TREX.”*

WOMAN: *“With TREX, and they have to go to the taxpayers, I think, if I understand it correctly, every time they need to update something, and the taxpayers are strapped enough.”*

WOMAN: *“But everyone disagrees on the solutions... I mean, just to even get the light rail was like pulling teeth for years.”*

That being said, there is also some typical skepticism that funds are being spent as wisely as possible.

“I don't know if it's that they don't have enough money, or they're just not budgeting properly, I mean, but, yeah, money is an issue whether it's because there's not enough, or they're not budgeting. I don't know.” – Colorado Spring woman

“But the money is there, I mean, it's out there...because we're paying what, \$.30 or \$.40 a gallon for tax, which is supposed to be going for our roads.” – Denver man

“(I see) rails falling off, cracks through the cement of the bridges, potholes in the road just deteriorating, ruts in the roads from the semis, which all comes to overcrowdedness over too much, too much use. If it wasn't like that, then it would be in a lot better shape. And it goes with the economy too and not enough money to bring it in even if they're growing like that. The money's not there to pay for these improvements, but then they're also going to bureaucracy.” – Pueblo man

- There are very mixed views of tolls across the groups, and there is no clear indication of what triggers a positive response in one person and a virulently negative response in another. This is an area we explored briefly in each group, but clearly it required its own research focus to understand the mixed views we saw. For example, regarding E-470 we heard:

“I have one of the express passes for E-470 because I drive to Denver for meetings and all of that or go to south Denver. I don’t care. That’s a time when I don’t care that it costs me more time. It is mental health. I can drive E-470 pretty much however you want. You get to the toll stations, and I’m happy with that.” – Fort Collins man

“Like E-470, I don’t know how busy it is during the day. I take it to and from the airport when I’m desperate because I find paying \$7 to drive to the airport ridiculous, the tolls that they put on that highway. I’m from the Midwest. A toll is \$.35, not \$3.50. I will use that if I have to, otherwise, I will take side streets all the way out to DIA.” – Denver man

Or regarding additional lanes being toll lanes we heard:

“I think (additional lanes being tolls) would be fabulous . . . I think it would reduce unnecessary traffic on the roads, and it would create, it would create a budget created by the people who really need it.” – Denver woman

“We get taxed already. We don’t need the toll.” – Colorado Spring man

- Three chief concerns arise in relation to tolling:
 1. They are only palatable if there is an option of a free lane for those who do not wish to pay to choose.

“I like it as a choice, but I also have the option to go through on I-25. And I think, like when I go on 470, I think these poor people that lived here before 470, and now they’re forced to pay the toll, I mean, I assume. I don’t know how that works, although they probably voted on it and voted that they pay the taxes, but I just think if it was forced upon me because I lived there, and all of a sudden, there was a toll road there, that would make me mad. But for me right now, it’s a choice.” – Colorado Springs woman
 2. It is a short term fix, as eventually the toll lanes will also become congested. More long-term solutions such as public transportation must also be integrated into the system.

“Well, one of the other problems I see is if you do that, especially during rush hour traffic, how many more people are going to take the toll road then? And eventually, the toll road, you’re paying \$2, and it’s taking you, you know, three minutes less because there’s that many more people, because you have to have to stop to pay the toll, plus there are that many more people.” – Denver man
 3. The concept of fluctuating tolls which increase in order to assure the toll lanes are not congested created a concern about equity and fairness. The inevitable “Lexus lanes” contrast is readily apparent to respondents.

- It is also important to note the lack of understanding as to how much tolls might need to realistically be priced in order to be feasible. For example, this exchange among Pueblo drivers illustrates the perception that a toll on a potential toll road from Pueblo to Denver would be a “couple bucks”:

MAN: “*Yeah, a toll road. What do you think?*”

WOMAN: “*I wish they would build it. I really wish they would build it.*”

MAN: “*Is it worth a couple of bucks to get to Denver faster?*”

WOMAN: “*Absolutely.*”

MAN: “*I think so, too.*”

ADDENDUM

Definition of Traffic

“Let’s say your job was to write the Webster’s Dictionary definition of traffic. – What would YOUR definition be?”

Fort Collins:

- 1) Too many automobiles, backed-up, bumper to bumper, slow moving, stop and start transportation
- 2) A 20th century social and transportation problem caused by the U.S.’s reliance on the automobile and cheap fossil fuels
- Movement of people, cars, trains, airplanes, etc. from one destination to another destination
- 1) The flow of transport vehicles on public thoroughfares
- 2) Generally referring to congestion, not the open road as in stuck in
- 3) 70s era rock band
- Frustration trying to get from Point A to Point B but can’t (in a car or vehicle); mandatory breathing of polluted air without escape
- Vehicles on public roadways navigating other vehicles, side streets, lights, signs, pedestrians and bicycles in an effort to go from Point A to Point B
- A system that is designed to facilitate the efficient movement of motor vehicles, trucks, cars, and other methods of motorized transportation
- Long lines of bumper to bumper traffic, red lights, stopped cars, road rage, rush hour accidents; causes anger, frustration, sense of urgency to get to your destination; also pollution and gas
- Lots of cars with either people in a hurry, on a cell phone, putting on lipstick or people sitting close to the steering wheel holding up the people in a hurry. Possibly a truck full of hay driving 45 while the rest of the cars drive 85.

- The accumulative effect of moving vehicles along set routes; (ADJ) Descriptive- ie traffic cop, traffic nightmare
- Multiple cars traveling along a street or highway; usually associated with more cars than the street or highway can comfortably handle

Denver Non-Commuters/Short Commute:

- Multiple vehicles/cars moving at a slow pace
- Automobiles line up behind one another on a road or highway; trying to get from Point A to Point B
- Hell?? cars too big for the roads, clogged up, competing with each other, breaking rules on a dime; Unpredictable patterns
- A mix of automobiles, trucks, and busses that move slowly during daylight and faster after dark
- Multiple cars bumper to bumper along side by side front and back; may have little to no movement with brake lights streaming for miles
- Many autos, trucks, motorcycles, etc. on a roadway; vehicles may be moving rapidly or slowly
- Many moving vehicles; many moving people
- Many cars on highways and roads going under the speed limit
- Noun; A word denoting the general speed, number of vehicles, accidents and other facets regarding on a road an area and the ability to travel through that area

Denver Commuters:

- Autos driving in streets and/or highways; time, volume, flow
- Non-stop cars moving at a snail's pace with people trying anyway to go faster even if it means breaking the law
- Too many cars all trying to utilize the same roads at the same time; backups occur and frustrations mount
- One or more motorized vehicles traveling a common roadway with the purpose of arriving at one or more specific destinations within a specific time frame
- The flow of people moving from one location to another in an organized manner in different forms of transportation (smoothly and efficiently is the goal)
- Several vehicles occupying the same roads in the same/several directions causing slower than normal vehicle movement simultaneously

- Lots of people sitting in cars on a road (ie highway or secondary roads) waiting to get moving onto their destination, but unable to go because there are too many vehicles
- Means where many cars (usually with one person in car) on same road at same time sitting with car running waiting for cars to move and travel in same direction; can stop a bunch of cars to a halt for no apparent reason

Grand Junction:

- People or persons in a car or bike going somewhere have to be somewhere at a certain time causing a massive mess due to lack of space
- Heavily congested areas crowded with cars, usually not enough street space to accommodate all of them
- The movement of people/goods from one place to another via a mode of transportation (be it mechanical or self-propelled)
- A medium to large number of people and/or vehicles within a certain area of roads or sidewalks
- Mass of humanity trying to get to various places on limited paths, in a narrow time frame
- An excessive concentration of vehicular movement exceeding the capacity of existing roads, causing reduced flow
- Vehicles traveling on roads between Point A and Point B in chaotic fashion, producing stress, congestion, noise, concentration to create problems

Pueblo:

- The synchronized movement of multiple vehicles.
- To stand still, not to move, to be toxified by fumes, slow to go money up in smoke
- An aggravation, situation you cannot control. A cluster of incompetent, unconcerned or unconscious individuals moving en-masse. Humans in herd mentality.
- Defines the movement of vehicles (ie cars, trucks, vans, semis in designated areas); traffic is controlled by use of stop signs, signals, yield signs, etc. to assure a fair amount of movement throughout a day and night.
- A flow of objects in a certain direction.

- A bunch of people trying to get to places in motorized vehicles; some obey the law, some break it. Drive at your own risk. Good luck. Burn rubber.
- A congestion of vehicles in a stagnant state
- Amount of cars in a given zone and speed at which they are traveling
- Disaster, wild, watch out or you will get hit
- ▶ Noun: traf' fik, A hold-up or drastic slow-down in the normal flow of vehicles, either on a highway or a street; the result of anything that causes an impediment in the flow of vehicles

Colorado Springs:

- An overabundance of cars on the road; congestion of vehicles; road construction
- Roadways and throughways where cars commute from one destination to another; a cluster of vehicles on the road
- Lots of automobiles on road backed up for a very long way. ALL lanes are full.
- Cars with limited space between them having to slow due to acceleration and deceleration durations which creates a direct influence on motion of cars up the road bottlenecking.
- Too many cars on the road and too crowded. Bumper to bumper
- Congestion too much volume at one time
- The movement of people and goods by cars, busses, trucks and other vehicles
- Movement of cars and other vehicles through a township or city and across the country to get to a point and place that we need to be.
- Stop and go cars one after another on a stretch of pavement, asphalt or concrete with white and yellow lines

Postcards to CDOT

Write a "postcard to CO Department of Transportation telling them how traffic affects you and what they should do to improve traffic congestion here in Colorado.

Fort Collins:

- Dear CDOT,
Traffic congestion suggestions
 - Tax commuters during high congestion ie rush hour times
 - Build more park and rides and incentivize carpooling
 - Allocate at least 20% of your budget to mass transportation (busses/trains)

- Traffic congestion costs me time, is frustrating and creates pollution. Less roads and more mass transit!!
- While commuting from Ft. Collins to North Boulder, I-25 traffic was out of control and life threatening during rush hours. I am so glad not to have to drive it anymore. My potential life sentence has been lifted.
- I would like to get where I need to go in a timely, safe manner. I do not mind paying a little to get where I need to go, but if it comes down to not getting there on time and safely, I do not want to pay. A monorail would be great between Cheyenne and Albuquerque. God bless!
- Traffic congestion makes me agitated and stresses me out. Sitting through two lights with a screaming child in the back seat would take years off of anybody's life. FINISH THE CONSTRUCTION ON I-25.
- Dear CDOT:
Please look at a variety of solutions that are not just more roads or lanes. Look at the option of mass transit light rail, commuter bus and other ways to move people more efficiently and improve the quality of life for everyone. Also stop listening to environmentalist wackos and actually do projects on schedule, on budget and efficiently, like E-470.
Thanks for listening, Mr. Colorado
- Allow more easements for future road expansion when approving developments. Don't close multiple roadways in an area for construction all at the same time. Think ahead, be proactive, not reactive.
- I get frustrated with stop and go traffic. I am a punctual person and it makes me crazy. By installing a rail system(s) in congested areas, I believe it would reduce traffic substantially.
- We love our cars. We hate traffic (which is to say, other people in their cars). Mass transit is not good enough yet. Efficient cars carry a safety risk! A commuter train that carries personal conveyances might work! Good luck!
- Traffic congestion affects my life negatively. Frustration at stop and go and dangerous conditions on I-25 has affected my blood pressure. I think it is taking way too long to get needed improvements. Please make a commuter train a priority between Cheyenne and Pueblo.
- Traffic congestion is frustrating. I would suggest being more forward thinking. Plan ahead instead of crisis management.

Denver Non-Commuters/Short Commute:

- I live directly in the city of Denver. To take a bus into downtown Denver it takes me 12 minutes to drive my car, the bus takes 45 minutes. I definitely use my car. Transit needs to be better. I hope I don't need the highway for my next job.
- Police need to give more tickets for not using turn signals and violations that impede traffic I think violations have become so common that they are part of the problem making traffic worse. If people knew they had to drive by the rules, we'd have a better flow.

- Think about toll lanes. More mass transit. Why does mass transit have to be above ground? Why not look at subway building? Not more pavement!
- Traffic makes me stressed out! Adding trains, toll roads, and more light rails would be the answer to so many of us who commute!
- Being retired, I am only affected by how many events I don't go to because of traffic and parking problems. You could solve this with more mass transit.
- Dear CDOT
The Denver metro area and I-70W have huge traffic congestion problems. To improve this situation, an efficient and effective mass transport system is advised.
- Everyday traffic takes up my precious time, to and from. I think you need to find a better way for people living long distances to travel.
- I feel that improving the light rail system will be the most effective way to alleviate traffic problems. Traffic is a pain in everyone's ass and anything that gets more cars off the roads or speeds up transit is a plus.
- I feel that the traffic congestion on Colorado roads is horrible at this present time. Some days it can take me 30 minutes to go from Boulder (36) to Hampden. Other days it can take one and half hours. Please improve our roadways with a better mass transit system.

Denver Commuters:

- I am frustrated you are moving so slow on these projects. Cut out the red tape and move the projects along faster. Get light rail up and running ASAP.
- Heavy or stalled traffic wastes gas and time and causes pollution. We need to develop alternatives such as light rail, busses, promote telecommuting and biker/walker friendly roads/paths. We also need to improve the traffic flow in the city by designating major through streets and synchronizing traffic lights.
- The congestion angers and frustrates me and in turn can affect how I feel and react during the whole day. CDOT should utilize every resource to complete current projects (TRex and light rail) in as quick a time frame as possible and study other cities with mass transit to use as a guideline for future changes.
- Efficiently put in place a/or multiple systems to keep traffic flowing, such as light rail to all areas (metro and airport and mountains) that is fair in cost to all consumers/drivers and assess additional lanes on highways, like parts of C-470 where needed.
- I have witnessed an ever increasing problem of traffic congestion on I-25, I-70. I would highly recommend and support funding be directed toward building a light rail system (Colorado Springs - Greeley and Evergreen- E. Aurora) to alleviate congestion and help decrease pollution and human health issues.
- Traffic is getting more out of hand every year in Colorado, whether on major highways or smaller local roads. I would like to see public transportation costs improve as well as the routes that they

go to so that some of the congestion is eliminated.

- Lower public transportation costs make available to West Metro Denver, North and East Denver communities. Quicker studies and quicker time frame to begin and complete projects. Segment portions of projects instead of constant tear down, build up, and tear down and build up. Redo I-25.

Grand Junction:

- Dear...
Please do a survey of the people for the people and listen to their suggestions and concerns and take major steps to a vote of the people.
- I wish that less retail area from smaller streets were built because that causes congestion. It would be nicer to have more neighborhood traffic friendly areas that were smaller.
- Better traffic planning in conjunction with development. Oversee and standardize round-a-bouts. Evaluate efficiency of worker/job assignments.
- Gentlemen:
Please note that I feel traffic congestion could be improved by 1) better road repair; 2) wider (more lanes) roads.
- The traffic increase affects me by increasing time spent in vehicle. Designate more lanes for high traffic times.
- Congestion is lowering the quality of life for all Coloradans. Encourage practical mass transit possibilities. Work with local planning to avoid bottlenecks due to development (ie: US 6 and 50 between downtown Grand Junction and malls west of city).
- Check accident rates with timing of lights at intersections/flow of traffic/congestion. Better timing of lights. Better planning of newly built roads investigating success at other cities vs. what would work well here.

Pueblo:

- (Affects me) Not at all. The biggest problem is lack of uniform movement. Cars traveling at different speeds.
- Traffic delays the delivery of supplies, goods, health care, and the ability to feel free. I would put more money into building infrastructure and lessen the number of administrative jobs.
- Traffic is a bitch. No two ways about it. Do what you can. Don't ask me for more money. Ticket more Texans. Better drivers cost us all less. Please raise minimum competency requirements.
- Traffic slow downs, delays are caused by congestion so let's double deck the massive interstates to move more local traffic, thereby, improving the interstate traffic and better utilize existing county and city roads.

- ▶ Traffic affects my travel time. When there is a wreck and the crash heap is to the side of the road, they should post bright orange speed limit signs to reiterate that the flow of traffic doesn't need to rubberneck.
- Thank you for your time and effort. I understand that due to the growth of our state/city that problems are going to occur. Even though we make improvements to our roads and highways we will never be able to alleviate our traffic problems.
- Traffic affects me when I become late to an appointment when I left early enough to get on time to the appointment. Maintain roads properly and not let them get so bad that it takes a major construction to fix what could have been done if properly maintained to begin with.
- Traffic congestion affects me by inducing frustration and anxiety. Though this problem is extremely complex, some improvements could be the widening of roads and improved stoplight technology.
- It takes too long on I-25 because we need to widen the highway. Also, have better signs on what is coming up ahead.
- Please put three lanes (each way) between Pueblo and Colorado Springs so that drivers doing the speed limit don't have to poke along behind slower vehicles or get run over by those who are speeding. Please put a super slab around Colorado Springs so I don't have to get held up going through it! Thanks!

Colorado Springs:

- Dear Sirs,
The traffic here in Springs can be somewhat irritating. I would like to see things done in a more timely manner. It would help the flow of traffic and make travel more enjoyable. Thank you.
- Dear CDOT,
We need a better system for identifying and punishing rude, inconsiderate drivers. Overall, I think you are doing job, although spending more time fixing potholes is a long time to fix. Also, consider coming up with a plan that will accommodate growth in 20-30 years, so you are not behind in the future.
- Traffic is real bad here in Colorado Springs due to the signal lights and potholes and due to the overgrowth of this city. Streets need to widen.
- Please widen roads to prevent bottlenecking and add more lanes. And make more main thoroughfares connecting different sides of the city.
- You should make the roads wider and less construction. So we can get to where we need faster.
- It takes more time to get to work. Makes me want to buy a bike. Put more men on the job to get things done quicker.
- I don't seem to have many problems at this time when I travel around town, but I feel very certain within the next 10-15 years, that will probably change as our city is growing faster than most people have expected!

- Traffic congestion frustrates me. I think more thought should be given to keeping traffic moving more turn lanes, better synchronized lights, identification of major thoroughfares with fewer lights, less access.
- Synchronize all lights, finish construction on I-25 and other roads in the city. Monitor roads so anyone that is not driving right could be taken care of by police.