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# Customer Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making

*Tangible Result Driver – Dave Nichols,  
Director of Program Delivery*

MoDOT seeks out and welcomes any idea that increases its options, because the department doesn't have all the answers. The department creates and preserves a transportation decision-making process that is collaborative and transparent, involving its customers in the determination of needs right through to the development, design and delivery of projects.



# Customer Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making

## Number of customers who attend transportation-related meetings

**Result Driver:** Dave Nichols, Director of Program Delivery

**Measurement Driver:** Bob Brendel, Outreach Coordinator

**Purpose of the Measure:**

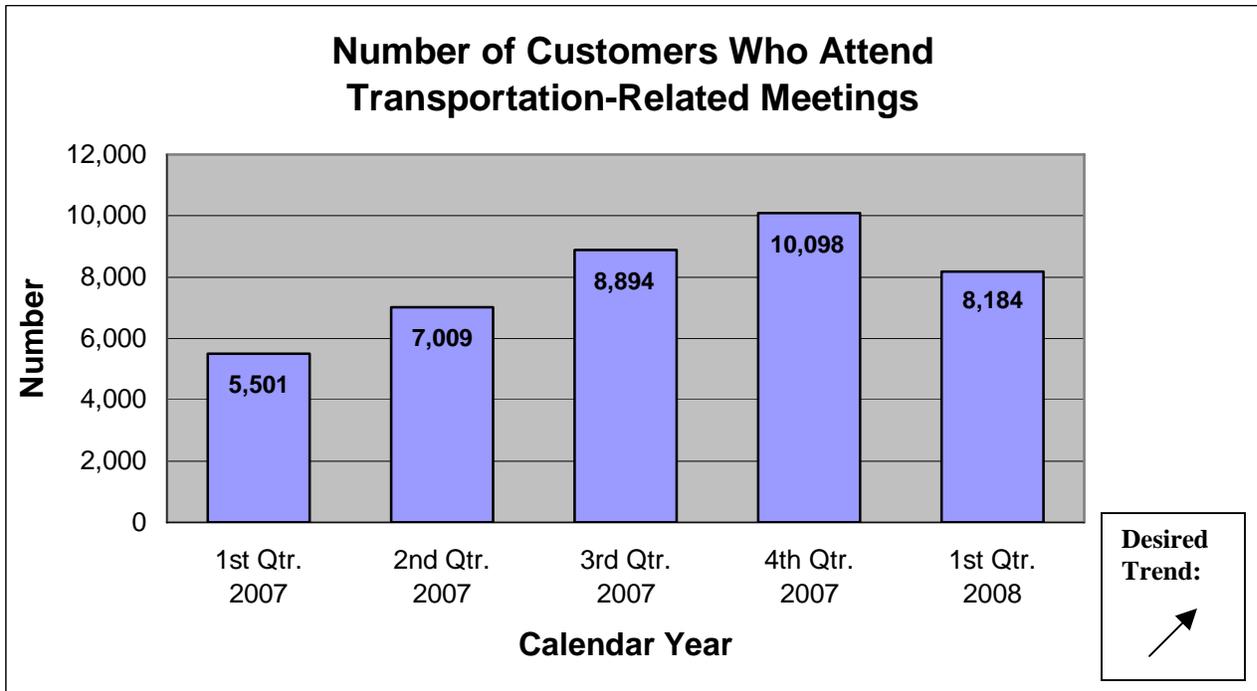
This measure gauges MoDOT’s public involvement success – both in terms of public meetings and hearings that are held to make collaborative decisions with the general public, communities, elected officials, stakeholders, and in terms of public informational events scheduled by MoDOT to keep its customers advised of project status and potential impacts that could be experienced.

**Measurement and Data Collection:**

Attendance is determined by analyzing sign-in sheets used at public meetings or by head counts conducted by MoDOT staff. This measure is updated quarterly.

**Improvement Status:**

After rising for four consecutive quarters to a record high of 10,098 in the fourth quarter of 2007, attendance at transportation-related meetings dropped off to 8,200 for the period of January-February-March 2008. Still, the first quarter 2008 figure represents a 49 percent increase over the same quarter a year ago. MoDOT emphasizes customer involvement in the decision-making process and in providing the information that drivers need to cope with the impacts of construction. MoDOT Community Relations managers meet quarterly to review this measure and to share best practices that help improve performance.



# Customer Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making

## *Percent of customers who are satisfied with feedback they receive from MoDOT after offering comments*

**Result Driver:** Dave Nichols, Director of Program Delivery

**Measurement Driver:** Bob Brendel, Outreach Coordinator

**Purpose of the Measure:**

This measure tracks MoDOT’s responses to its customers. MoDOT routinely asks people who attend public meetings/hearings to submit comments that will be examined by the project team and will become part of the project’s official record. It is important that people who avail themselves of this opportunity know that their comments are taken seriously.

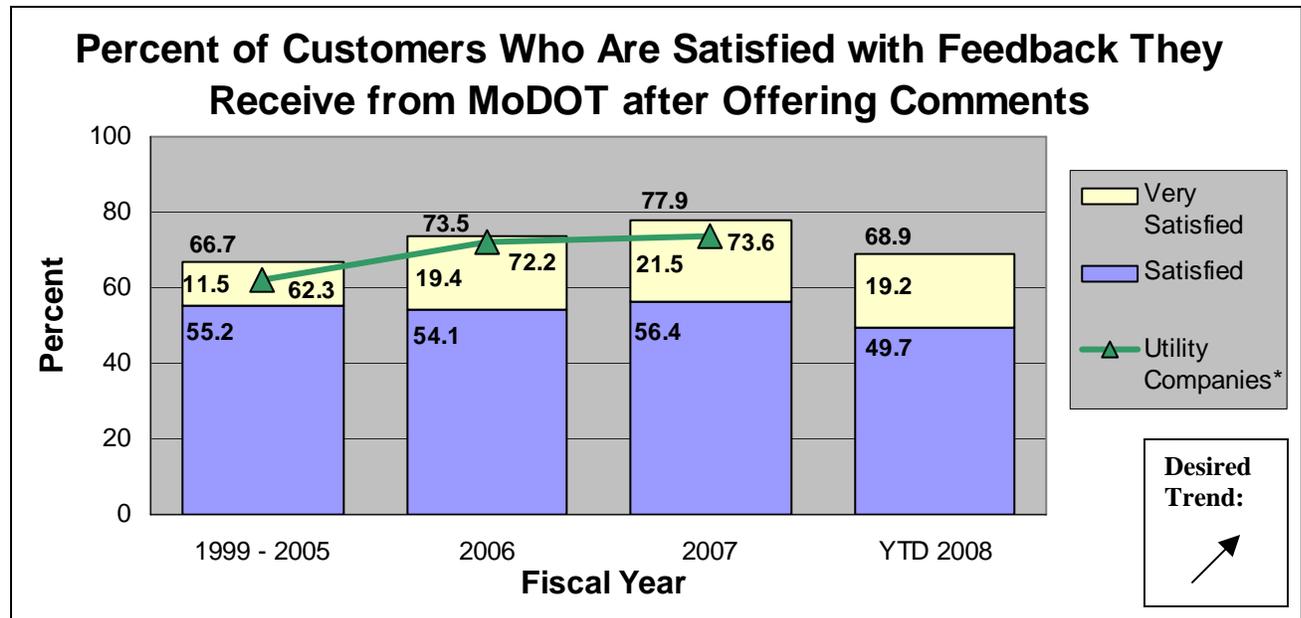
**Measurement and Data Collection:**

MoDOT routinely coordinates a survey in cooperation with university partners for persons who attend project-specific meetings and hearings. The initial survey was sent to more than 4,500 persons who attended meetings in a five-year period. A survey process continues, with contacts made each time a project reaches the official public hearing milestone. This is an annual measure based upon a fiscal year, and data is analyzed twice each year.

**Improvement Status:**

Midway through fiscal year 2008, satisfaction with MoDOT’s responsiveness to customer concerns during project development has fallen nine percent, from 77.9 percent to 68.9 percent. The reason, though, is largely due to one project – the Glasgow Bridge – which is understandable since the improvement strategy involves a total closure of the facility for up to 12 months. The data through the first six months of fiscal year 2008 represents feedback on 13 projects across six MoDOT districts. Of the responses received, 36.6 percent of all dissatisfied respondents were from that one project, which skews the data somewhat.

Quarterly discussions and reviews of Tracker measures with MoDOT managers across the state continue to enhance performance in the area of public involvement and proactive communication with MoDOT customers. MoDOT’s satisfaction rate compares favorably with that of energy utility companies whose customer satisfaction the American Customer Satisfaction Index, coordinated by the University of Michigan, evaluates.



\*As measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index.

# Customer Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making

## *Percent of customers who feel MoDOT includes them in transportation decision-making*

**Result Driver:** Dave Nichols, Director of Program Delivery

**Measurement Driver:** Sue Cox, Transportation Planning Special Projects Coordinator

**Purpose of the Measure:**

This data helps determine the effectiveness of MoDOT’s project planning outreach efforts.

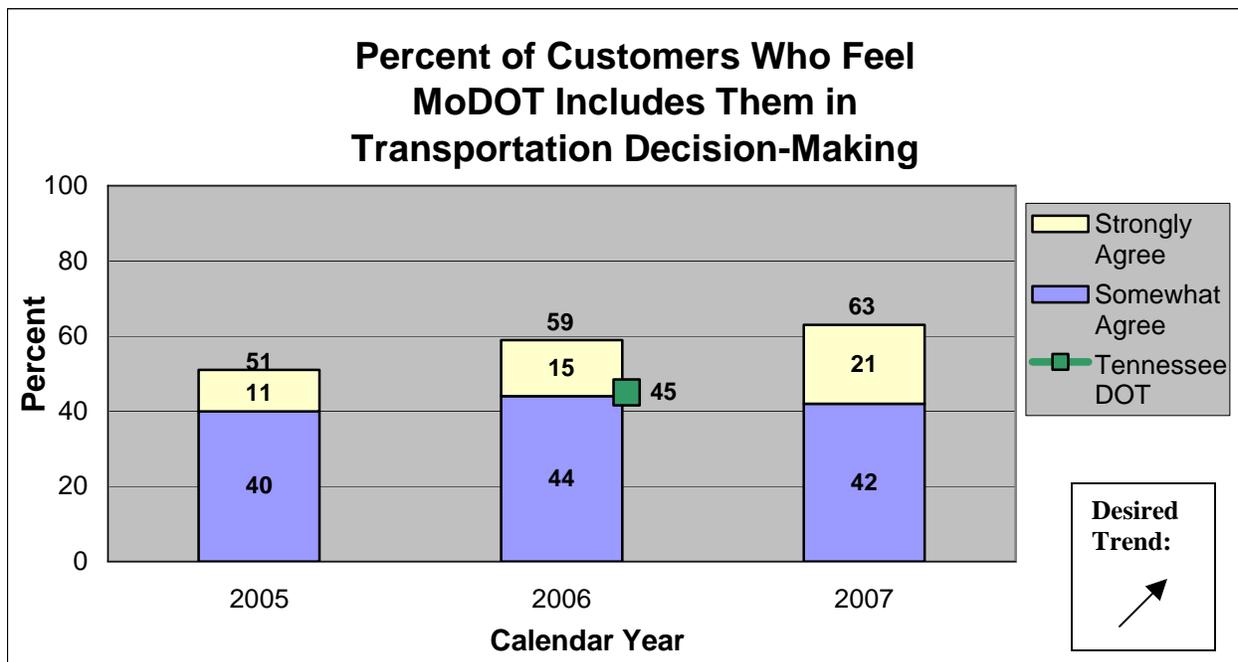
**Measurement and Data Collection:**

This is an annual measure, and this year’s data, gathered from a statewide random telephone survey of approximately 3,500 Missourians, was collected in May 2007. Survey data originally collected for MoDOT’s long-range planning initiative called Missouri Advance Planning in May 2005 provides the original baseline for comparison of future data.

**Improvement Status:**

MoDOT learned in the 2007 customer survey that 63 percent of the survey sample feels MoDOT considers customer concerns and needs when developing transportation decisions, up from 59 percent in 2006. This means satisfaction with MoDOT’s efforts to include citizens has increased by 4 percent from 2006 to 2007. The Tennessee Department of Transportation also measures customers’ perceptions regarding involvement in transportation decision-making, and a comparison is being made in the following chart between MoDOT’s 2007 performance and Tennessee’s 2006 performance, which is the most recent available data.

To continuously improve in this area, MoDOT identifies additional opportunities to use techniques as outlined in the planning framework decision-making and public involvement process with local officials, planning partners, community leaders, elected officials and the general public. Media interviews, Web site publicity, news releases, newsletters, specific project surveys, public involvement surveys and community meetings continually provide new opportunities to interact with the public, share MoDOT’s direction and discuss transportation priorities.



# Customer Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making

## *Percent of positive feedback responses received from planning partners regarding involvement in transportation decision-making*

**Result Driver:** Dave Nichols, Director of Program Delivery

**Measurement Driver:** Sue Cox, Transportation Planning Special Projects Coordinator

**Purpose of the Measure:**

This measures MoDOT’s efforts to include statewide planning partners (members of metropolitan planning organizations and regional planning commissions) in transportation-related decision-making.

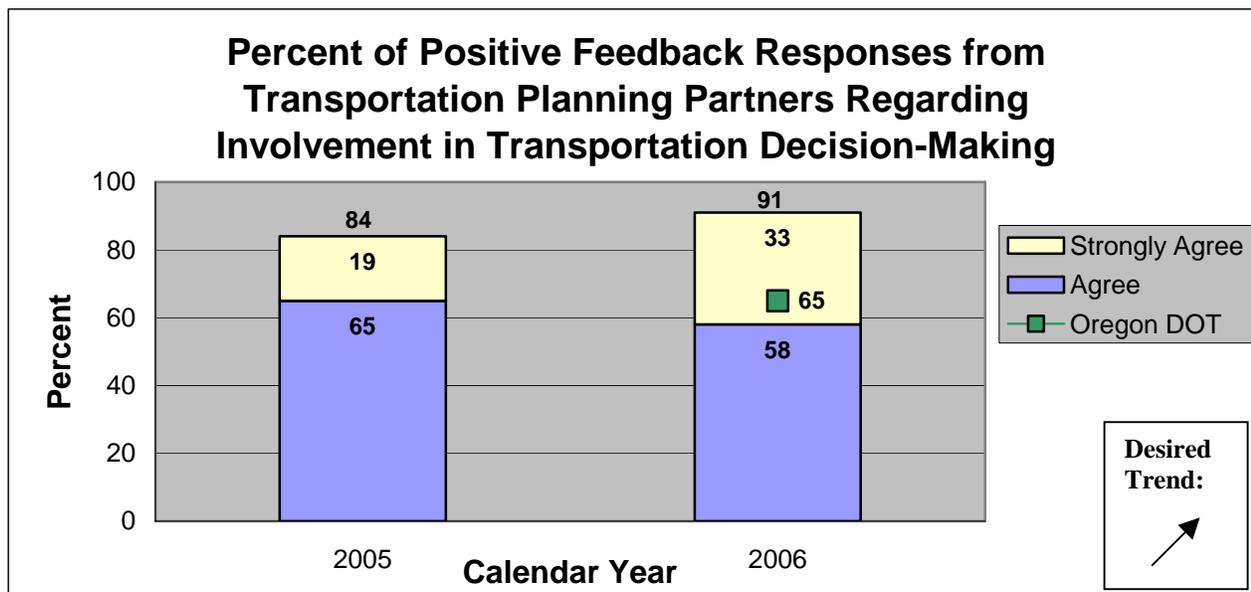
**Measurement and Data Collection:**

MoDOT Transportation Planning works with university partners to administer a survey measuring planning partners’ involvement in the transportation decision-making process. The survey answers are based on a scale that measures those who strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. This measure has changed from a quarterly measure to an annual measure. Previously, survey data evaluating MoDOT’s outreach efforts was collected from planning partners following each public involvement activity or outreach effort and summarized for a quarterly report. Planning partners indicated a survey following each public outreach activity was excessive, and it resulted in a decline of survey participation and feedback. Data is updated annually each July.

**Improvement Status:**

The 2006 annual survey received 80 responses from 155 distributed e-mails resulting in a 51.6 percent response rate as compared to the 2005 quarterly response rate of 34.7 percent. The 2006 results indicate a 91 percent satisfaction rate demonstrating an improvement from 84 percent satisfaction in 2005. The new annual survey focuses on feedback regarding the overall involvement of planning partners in the planning process rather than on individual MoDOT outreach activities. A comparison can be made to the Oregon Department of Transportation, which measures similar public involvement efforts. In 2006, which is the most recent data available, the Oregon DOT shows 65 percent of all respondents involved in transportation planning feel their involvement in decision-making was effective.

To continuously improve in this area, MoDOT implements effective communication, and public involvement tools and techniques based on the survey respondents’ written comments. MoDOT’s planning framework, which is a process used to ensure planning partners are able to influence transportation decisions regarding how transportation funds will be spent in their areas, is based on achieving informed consent. Informed consent means that planning partners have an opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process and understand the outcomes even if solutions do not entirely reflect their desires. By listening to planning partners, MoDOT is learning new ways to get better involvement, fine-tune communication and try out ideas that support positive improvements.



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