

The MPO Wants to Know: NASCO

In an effort to better understand public views, the MPO has launched a series of online surveys about various transportation-related topics. The survey results will help the MPO develop plans and projects for the future. The responses also will be shared with appropriate roundtables and policymakers. For a list of available surveys, please visit the MPO website at <http://www.dmampo.org/user/survey.html>. Below are the results of the latest survey, which was distributed to coincide with the 2010 North America's SuperCorridor Coalition (NASCO) conference held in Des Moines from June 15-17.

Question 1. What prior knowledge do you have about NASCO, if any?

Of the individuals that responded to the survey, approximately half stated they had no or very little prior knowledge about NASCO. Others stated their only knowledge of NASCO came from MPO newsletters and emails. Just one respondent noted the three countries involved in NASCO and that the organization "works to improve the efficiency of transporting goods between the nations."

Question 2. The NASCO corridor is described as a "multi-modal transportation network." What does the term multi-modal mean to you?

Nearly all survey respondents recognized that *multi-modal* transportation includes different types of transportation, including personal automobiles, trains, airplanes, boats, buses, etc. It is "the use of various transportation methods to move products" and "working toward a transportation system that coordinates between different forms of transportation." *Multi-modal* transportation recognizes "the existence and interconnectedness of various transportation options and the associated infrastructure."

Question 3. NASCO members endeavor to reach several goals. Of the following, which is the most important to you?

Capitalize on the efficiency and security of existing trade and transportation infrastructure.....	14.2%
Enhance the environment.....	14.2%
Generate jobs	21.4%
All are equally important	50.0%

Question 4. NASCO unites state and local governments with businesses of all sizes. In addition to such partnerships, what do you feel could be done to improve transportation and trade not only in Iowa but along the entire NASCO corridor?

Respondents feel that transportation and trade could be improved through several options. Suggestions include improved bus and train service, the installation of multi-modal transfer facilities in major metropolitan areas, and providing “high-speed railroads to compete with highly subsidized airlines and highways.” Existing infrastructure should be fixed to utilize more rail, separate lanes for semi-trailers should be installed on the interstate, and awareness of trade opportunities should be increased. One respondent suggested all need to work together and think outside the box; newer forms of transportation may not presently be economically feasible but would be more energy efficient and environmentally sound. Another respondent suggested reducing taxes and government regulation to improve transportation and trade.

Question 5. Do you think it is important to promote the NASCO corridor? Please explain.

Approximately 64% of respondents believe that promoting the NASCO corridor is important. From Des Moines’ perspective, it is “important for the nation to continue to view Interstate 80 and Interstate 35 as critical transportation routes.” Others hope it will encourage job creation and believe that this corridor has the potential to increase money spent in the state. Just one respondent opposes the NASCO corridor; this individual asserted that “opening our border even further and allowing unsafe vehicles to be driven by untrained dangerous drivers is not a good thing.”

Question 6. Overcoming congestion is just one challenge facing NASCO members. In the Des Moines metropolitan area, where do you experience the most congestion?

Survey respondents most often cited the interstate routes as having the most congestion. However, they do not want Interstate 235 to be widened; rather, respondents would like officials to develop more convenient transit options. Several respondents noted that the Des Moines metropolitan area has “little congestion comparatively to other major metropolitan areas” and expressed that “very short ‘rush hours’ during the 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. commute times only add five to ten minutes to a normal twenty-five minute commute.”

Question 7. Besides transportation and trade issues, NASCO aims to decrease the damaging effects of economic pursuits on the environment. What do you do/have you done to reduce your environmental impact? (Please check all that apply)

- Minimize how much I drive a personal automobile69.2%
- Upgraded to more energy-efficient appliances46.2%
- Installed compact fluorescent light bulbs in my home/office69.2%
- Utilize reusable bags rather than plastic bags when shopping.....46.2%
- Recycle.....84.6%
- Other
- Stay home, travel less
 - Do not buy any produce from Mexico
 - Grow my own food, super insulate my home, and use geothermal
 - Ride my bike for errands and commuting
 - Line dry clothes year round
 - Coordinate auto trips to combine errands, etc.

Question 8. When shopping, do you look to purchase items produced locally?

- Yes64.3%
- No.....35.7%

Question 9. Port Des Moines launched during the spring of 2010, with the goal of assisting central Iowa businesses interested in domestic and international trade. If you are business person, have you leveraged this resource?

- Yes0.00%
- No.....28.6%
- I am not a business person71.4%

Question 10. The MPO is currently supporting an intermodal usage survey, which will help determine the feasibility of developing an intermodal rail/truck facility in central Iowa to assist area businesses in moving their goods. If you are a business person, would this kind of facility benefit your company?

- Yes14.3%
- No.....14.3%
- Unsure.....0.00%
- I am not a business person71.4%