Who Better Reflects Public Opinion?

An Exploratory Analysis of Local Government Officials in Georgia

John Clayton Thomas

and

Theodore H. Poister

Department of Public Management and Policy

Andrew Young School of Policy Studies

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA 30303

E-mail: jcthomas@gsu.edu

Prepared for presentation at the Public Management Research Conference, Columbus, Ohio, October 1-3, 2009.

Representative democracy rests on the premise that public officials mostly understand and reflect the preferences of their constituents. Traditionally, that premise pertained principally to elected officials, the officials who were chosen by their constituents in free and fair elections and who could be replaced in subsequent elections. These are the officials who are directly accountable to the public and who can be hired and fired by the public.

The representative administrator? Contemporary perspectives on democratic governments imply a question of whether the same expectation should hold for appointed public administrators. After all, much of what government does is decided not by elected policy-makers, but by the appointed administrators who are charged with implementing the often vague mandates formulated by those officials (e.g., Posner 2001; Selden, Brewer, and Brudney 1999; McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast 1987). Faced with vague mandates, administrators may often need to make the kinds of value decisions once thought to be the prerogative of their elected superiors. And, to the extent that they must make value decisions that impact the public, the question arises of how well the views of these administrators correspond to the views of the public.

Prompted by this question, many researchers in recent decades have turned their attention to the degree of correspondence between public opinion and the opinions of public administrators (for a good brief summary, see Wise, 2004). One line of research has focused on this correspondence for senior public administrators in general, especially on national issues such as desirable levels of public spending (e.g., Dolan, 2002; Lewis 1990). Another line of research has focused on the narrower question of whether

administrators with specific group identities hold opinions similar to the general membership of those groups (e.g., Keiser, Wilkins, Meier, and Holland, 2002). For example, do African-American public administrators hold opinions similar to African-Americans in general? Or, do female public administrators hold opinions similar to those of women in general?

Unanswered questions. To our knowledge, there has been relatively little examination of an obvious next question: Whose views, between those of appointed administrators and those of elected officials, correspond better to those of the public? Traditional democratic theory would suggest imply that elected officials would—and should—mirror the public's preferences better as the officials who are directly accountable to the public. Administrative accountability to the public is, after all, mostly only indirect through the elected officials who hire and fire administrators. If, however, as much contemporary data indicates (e.g., Thomas and Melkers 1999; Coulter 1992), many appointed public administrators interact closely with the public on a regular basis, there may be grounds to expect that many administrators will understand the public as well as or better than do elected officials. Administrators who are involved with everyday service delivery might in fact stay in better touch with the public than do their elected superiors.

Nor is there much evidence on how the correspondence of public opinion to public officials' opinions varies across different groups in the population or between different issues and different issue dimensions. For example, are public officials, consistent with traditional elitist theory, more in tune with the perceptions of the advantaged (e.g., whites, the wealthier) than of the disadvantaged (e.g., blacks and other

minorities, the poor)? Do elected and appointed officials vary from one another in how elitist or egalitarian they are in their perceptions? Finally, are officials more attuned to public opinion on some issues, perhaps the issues that or more salient at any given time, than on other, less salient issues

The Survey Data

A unique combination of surveys offers an opportunity to explore these questions in relationship to transportation issues in the State of Georgia. The Georgia Department of Transportation originally asked the authors to conduct a "stakeholder audit" for the department, identifying the universe of the Department's external stakeholders, defining what the Department knew and did *not* know about each of them, and suggesting what additional assistance the Department might need from each. As part of the additional assistance, the authors recommended surveys of various stakeholder groups, including the three groups on which this research focuses: (1) the top elected official of every Georgia local government (i.e., mayors of cities and chairpersons of county commissions), (2) the top transportation administrator in each of those local governments, (3) a random sample of Georgia adult residents (see also Thomas, Poister, and Ertas, forthcoming). A fourth group, members of the Georgia legislature, was also surveyed and will be included in a later extension of this research.

For the local government officials, the survey instruments were originally constructed in 2006 with input from advisory committees of (1) GDOT officials who worked with local governments, (2) local elected officials (i.e., mayors and county commission chairs), and (3) top local transportation administrators (e.g., heads of public

works departments or, in smaller jurisdictions, city or county managers or administrators). The instruments were modified in 2008 to reflect additional questions GDOT officials had about the effects of changes in a few departmental programs.

The surveys targeted the top transportation administrator and top elected official in each of Georgia's 515 municipalities and 159 counties, using mailing lists provided by the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) and the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), the principal organizations for the state's counties and cities. The survey of elected officials targeted the mayor for every city and the county commission chair for every county. The survey of administrators targeted the appointed official with each local government who was principally responsible for the jurisdiction's transportation function. In larger jurisdictions, that individual would likely be the head of a public works department or a transportation engineer; in smaller jurisdictions, it might be a public works department head or even the city or county manager or administrator.

The surveys were conducted in late summer and early fall of 2008. Their administration was staggered, with more than a month's lag between the survey of administrators and the survey of elected officials. Administrators were surveyed first to reduce the possibility that they might otherwise be asked by their superiors to complete the elected official surveys, too. To increase participation, both surveys were preceded by an alert letter through regular mail co-signed by the GDOT Commissioner and the Executive Directors of the ACCG and GMA.

The surveys were administered in a dual-mode method, online and by hard copy through regular mail. Following the alert letter, the survey was distributed online to administrators for whom e-mail addresses were available and by regular mail to others.

The survey was initially sent to the individual recommended by the ACCG and GMA as the county or municipal transportation contact person, but with instructions for forwarding if a different administrator was more appropriate. Both the e-mail and regular mail solicitations provided the url for the online survey, and most respondents chose this mode. Anyone who did not respond within two weeks of the original solicitation was sent a hard-copy version of the survey, and additional reminders were subsequently sent via e-mail and regular mail to those who still had not responded. An essentially identical process was followed for the subsequent survey of elected officials.

As Table 1 shows, the response rates were almost identical for administrators (61%) and elected officials (60%) as well as for counties as compared to municipalities. These appear to be excellent response rates for surveys of this kind. As one standard of comparison, Van Ryzin and Freeman (1997) obtained a response rate of 46% for a similar stakeholder survey. Judging from Table 2, both groups of respondents also appear to be relatively representative of jurisdictions of different population sizes. No population grouping is over- or under-represented by more than a few percentage points, and there is no pattern of response rates increasing or decreasing with population size.

The survey of Georgia residents was conducted by telephone in February 2009, shortly after the local government surveys. The survey targeted a randomly selected representative cross-section of Georgia residents, using random digit dialing and a protocol providing for a minimum of ten callbacks. That approach yielded completed interviews with 801 Georgia residents 18 years of age or older, with an overall response rate of around 40%. The sample reflected accurately the distribution of the state's population in terms of gender, age, and the proportion residing in the 13-county Atlanta

metropolitan area as opposed to other, more rural parts of the state. On the dimension of race, however, whites were overrepresented in the sample by about 10 percentage points, with blacks correspondingly underrepresented. This problem will be addressed in the analyses by conducting separate analyses for black and white respondents.

All three surveys were designed to solicit feedback on perceptions of transportation services and performance provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation. With the local government officials, questions focused mostly on specific GDOT programs (e.g., a general State Aid Program, a Bridge Program, a Local Technical Assistance Program) , and ongoing processes of GDOT assistance to local governments (e.g., transportation planning, training) where local governments work with GDOT. The two surveys differed from each other in that, on the advice of the local elected official advisory committee, questions about program details were asked mostly of administrators, with elected officials asked more for general assessments. Finally, the public opinion survey asked more generally about transportation services and priorities and not about specific programs.

This research focuses on seven questions about the perceived quality of transportation outcomes and GDOT performance that were asked in an identical or nearly identical manner in all three surveys. On six identical questions, respondents were asked to use the same "A-F grading scale where A is excellent, B is good, C is fair, D is poor, and F is failing" to answering each of the following questions:

1. How would you grade state highways in your area in terms of pavement condition and ride quality?

2. How would you grade state highways in your area in terms of smooth traffic flow or the absence of excessive congestion?
3. How would you grade state highways in your area in terms of safety?
4. How would you grade GDOT's performance in providing Georgia residents with a variety of transportation options such as roads, public transit, air, rail, pedestrian, and bicycle travel?
5. How would you grade the Department's performance in preserving or improving the environment when planning and building transportation projects?
6. How would you grade GDOT's overall performance in meeting transportation needs in Georgia?"

A seventh dimension of GDOT performance was assessed through slightly different questions of citizens as opposed to local officials, but questions sufficiently similar that we believe they can be viewed as comparable. Citizens were asked to use the same grading scale to answer this question: "How would you grade the performance of the Georgia Department of Transportation in communicating with the public?" By contrast, local elected officials and administrators were asked to respond on a five-point agree-disagree scale to this statement: "GDOT disseminates timely and accurate information to the public."

Method of Analysis

We have only begun to analyze these data, and will report only preliminary findings here. We are still exploring which analytical techniques may be most

appropriate for the data, with no certainty that the initial approaches we have taken are the best.

With all three surveys, the home county and GDOT district of every respondent could be identified, permitting a comparison of how closely local officials' perceptions of GDOT performance match the perceptions of constituents in their home areas. Admittedly, the geographic match is far from perfect. In particular, in counties with large populations and multiple municipalities, different citizens might identify different of the local jurisdictions, producing a very flawed match between citizen respondents and local government official respondents. A close match of citizen to jurisdiction might be obtained only in counties where the county government assumed principal responsibility for the area.

Even a limited correspondence between public opinion and local officials' opinions might not be expected unless local officials actually see themselves as representing their constituents in interactions with GDOT. If they see themselves in that kind of delegate role for their constituents, their perceptions might be expected to correspond to those of their constituents. Indeed, in order for a case to be made that these officials can accurately represent their constituents, there *should* be some correspondence between the opinions of the two populations.

Data from the surveys indicate that officials do in fact see themselves serving in a delegate role relative to GDOT. Asked if they agreed or disagreed with this statement, "As a local government official, I view myself as representing the interests of local citizens/taxpayers to whom GDOT is accountable," almost all of the responding elected officials (95.7% or 336 of 351 respondents) agreed. Local administrators were of

essentially the same mind, with 93.1% (or 311 of 334) of those who responded agreeing. In short, almost everyone in both groups of officials *believed* they represent their citizens to GDOT.

As a first step in assessing actual opinion correspondence, we calculated the mean score by county on each of the transportation outcome questions separately for the elected officials and the administrators from those counties. These average elected official ratings and average administrator ratings were then added to the public opinion data base through a series of "IF" statements. Thus, if administrators in Bartow County gave an average grade of 2.5 to the "pavement condition and ride quality" of state highways in their area, the "administrators' pavement condition" score would be set at 2.5 for every respondent in the public opinion survey who lived in Bartow County. Next, correlations were run between the individual citizen respondent's grade on each of the performance dimensions and the average scores on the same dimension for administrators and elected officials in the same county.

A similar protocol was followed at the level of the GDOT district. GDOT divides the state into seven districts, each of which comprises a collection of counties, and provides services to that district coordinated through district offices. The district-level organization implies a logic for transportation outcomes possibly varying by district, i.e., as a reflection of different district-level priorities or competence. Accordingly, we also calculated mean scores by district on each of the transportation outcome questions separately for the elected officials and the administrators from each district, then added those average ratings to the public opinion data base through another series of "IF" statements.

Finally, in a third approach we are now attempting, we essentially reversed our approach. Rather than calculating mean scores for local officials by county and district, we calculated mean scores for those same jurisdictions for respondents in the citizen survey. This approach provides the ability to compare the perspectives of individual local officials to those of the average citizen in each jurisdiction, which arguably may be the more important question about the representativeness of officials' opinions.

Findings

Before examining opinion correspondence, it may be useful to overall patterns in the data. Toward that end, Table 3 displays several summary statistics on each of the outcome measures, including statewide means and standard deviations. In addition, the far right-hand column of the table shows the difference in means between the highest and lowest district scores for each of the three survey groups, as a crude measure of the variability between districts.

The data show citizens, local elected officials, and local administrators giving roughly similar average grades—in the "B" to "C" range—on a statewide basis to all seven of the transportation outcomes. The standard deviations of those grades also proved similar, hovering in a range from .7 to slightly more than 1.0.

Within that overall similarity, there are some notable differences. For one thing, the performance dimensions of "road quality" and "road safety" stand out for receiving the highest average grades (in the 2.1-2.4 range, depending on the survey group) and having the lowest standard deviations (in the .7-.8 range) of all of the measures. Those findings probably reflect two realities about Georgia highways: They are viewed within

the state as having relatively high quality and safety, and those positive views are not thought to vary greatly across different areas of the state.

As might be surmised from that description, neither road quality nor road safety appears to have much salience as an issue for Georgia residents. Assuming salience provides a reason to spur officials' attention to public opinion, we might expect weaker correspondence of public and officials' opinions on these transportation performance dimensions.

At the other end of the spectrum, all three groups gave some of their lowest average grades and showed greater variability on the dimensions of "traffic congestion" and "providing Georgia residents with a variety of transportation options." The findings on traffic congestion come as no surprise given the congestion problems of the Atlanta metro area as contrasted to the rest of the state. Traffic congestion has long been a salient issue in the Atlanta area and consequently for Georgia as a whole, providing possible grounds to expect more correspondence between officials' and citizens' opinions.

The lower grades and higher variability on providing a variety of transportation options come as somewhat a surprise because that performance dimension has not appeared to be a broadly salient issue in the state. This issue, though, may be more salient for elites than for the public given the slighter lower grades and greater variability between districts for administrators and elected officials on this dimension. It is unclear whether the salience of this dimension for elites might prompt higher correspondence of elite to public opinion.

Average grades and standard deviations for the other transportation outcomes fall mostly in between the poles defined by the four dimensions already discussed. It is more

difficult to guess what degree of salience or opinion correspondence to expect for these dimensions.

County-level Correspondence

To assess opinion correspondence at the county level, Table 4 reports a variety of correlations. The first column, labeled "all," reports correlations for the full Georgia resident survey as compared to respondents to the elected officials' and administrators' surveys. Subsequent columns report correlations for sub-groups of Georgia residents for whom we might have expected greater or lesser opinion correspondence.

Judging from the table, there is relatively little opinion correspondence at the county level. The only notable correlations appear, for both administrators and elected officials, on (1) traffic flow and congestion and (2) GDOT's overall performance in meeting the state's transportation needs and, for elected officials only, on (3) preserving the environment with GDOT projects. Even those correlations, though statistically significant, are modest, ranging from about .1 to .25, hardly suggestive of high correspondence between the perceptions of citizens and their local officials at the county level. Moreover, there is essentially no relationship between the perceptions of citizens and those of either their local elected officials or their appointed administrators on four of the six performance dimensions: (1) pavement condition and road quality, (2) highway safety, (3) providing a variety of transportation options, or (4) communication quality.

Nor are the patterns of correspondence more pronounced if we focus only on more specific sub-groups of citizens, as shown in the middle columns of Table 4. For the most part, local elected and administrator respondents are no more in tune with heavy drivers, higher-income respondents, or minority respondents than with citizens in general.

As one exception, officials' opinions did correspond more closely to those residents who said they were more familiar with GDOT, but the differences verge on the negligible.

One other complicating factor could be the large number of Georgia counties (159). It may not be reasonable to expect the perceptions of local officials to match those of county residents where the citizen respondents from that county number only one to a few. To control for this factor, we ran a separate analysis limited to those counties for which the public opinion survey included at least five respondents. As the results in the far right-hand column of Table 4 show, this control does not produce any higher correspondence either. Correlations actually prove slightly *lower* for respondents from larger counties on the three performance dimensions where significant correlations were observed between the opinions of all residents and those of local officials.

Finally, the data also do not suggest any real difference between local elected officials and local administrators in their mirroring of public opinion. Elected officials show more instances of statistically significant correlations with public opinion, but due entirely to the dimension of GDOT's environmental impact.

District-level Correspondence

Perhaps, though, counties are too small a geographical unit for observing differences in transportation outcomes, especially differences that might have a state-level origin. GDOT itself is organized into seven districts, providing a *prima facie* rationale for why variations in transportation outcomes might be more pronounced *between* districts than they are between the counties. And, the correspondence of public opinion with local officials' opinions might be more pronounced *within* districts and more differentiated *between* districts than within or between counties. To test for this

possibility, we conducted analyses by district similar to those shown for counties, with results displayed in Table 5.

The results are mixed. On the one hand, the table shows more instances of statistically significant correlations between officials' and public opinion at the district level than was observed at the county level. There are 37 such instances at the district level as compared to only 22 at the county level. In addition, those statistically significant patterns extend to more performance dimensions than was true at the county level, with substantial correspondence for some group—citizens in general or one or more specific sub-groups—extending to every performance dimension except road safety and GDOT communications.

On the other hand, the magnitude of the strongest correlations remains modest, with no correlation reaching as high as .3. In short, opinion correspondence extends to more transportation performance dimensions at the district level than at the county level, but it does not achieve substantial magnitude on any of the dimensions.

In one other notable pattern, local elected officials appear to be somewhat more in tune with public opinion at the district level than do local administrators. Across the full citizen sample and various sub-groups, there are 21 instances of significant correlations between the opinions of the public and those of elected officials, as compared to only 16 (not including one in the wrong direction) for local administrators. Local elected officials may reflect public opinion better than do local administrators.

District-Level Determinants of Officials' Opinions

In the final analysis for this paper, we sought to examine the determinants of officials' perspectives on GDOT performance at the district level. (A similar analysis at

the county level is yet to be conducted.) The perspectives of local officials were modeled as potentially a function of several factors:

- Average opinions of citizens in the district.
- Whether the official is from a city or a county.
- The population of the jurisdiction where the official holds office (a 5-point ordinal variable in the surveys).
- For elected officials, the extent of their familiarity with GDOT programs.
- For administrators, the extent of their jurisdiction's involvement with GDOT programs.
- The length of the official's tenure in office.

Counties might be expected to be more positive about GDOT performance than cities due to their greater involvement with roads and the like. Familiarity or involvement with GDOT programs might also prompt officials to be more positive toward GDOT. The results will be summarized below, but they were obtained too late to be put in tabular form for this paper.

As the bottom line, the findings once again show no strong patterns. The highest R^2 reaches only .141 (for traffic flow and congestion for elected officials), with only three other R^2 exceeding .1.

With that said, some moderate patterns conform to expectations. First, the perceptions of elected officials prove more explicable by the variable mix than are those of local administrators. All seven R^2 results for the elected officials exceed the corresponding results for the administrators. As for what shapes the opinions of elected officials:

- Familiarity with GDOT proves a statistically significant predictor for six of the GDOT performance dimensions,
- Population proves statistically significant for four of the dimensions, and
- The average citizen grade emerges as a significant predictor for three, the most significant predictor in each case.

The opinions of these elected officials might consequently be characterized as reflecting a combination of their constituency (citizen opinions and population size, in particular) and their interest in GDOT.

Conclusions

This exploratory research has produced some intriguing hints about possible relationships between public opinion and the opinions of local government officials on transportation issues in Georgia. Specifically:

- The correspondence between officials' opinions and public opinion appears to be stronger, though not strong, on transportation issues of higher salience to both groups. Thus, the greatest correspondence appears on the issue of traffic flow and congestion, a chronic issue in the Atlanta area and Georgia more generally.
- Local government elected officials appear to be more in tune with public opinion on transportation-related issues than are appointed local government administrators, although the contrast is not pronounced.

- The opinions of local government elected officials appear to reflect their circumstances—and citizen perceptions and local population, in particular—more than is the case with local administrators.

These are only preliminary findings and conclusions. More analysis of the data is planned, including analysis of how state legislators compare to local elected officials in terms of reflecting public opinion.

References

Coulter, Philip B. 1992. There's madness in the method: Redefining citizen contacting of government officials. *Urban Affairs Quarterly 28,* 297-316.

Dolan, Julie A. 2002. The budget-minimizing bureaucrat? Empirical evidence from the Senior Executive Service. *Public Administration Review, 62*, 42-50.

Keiser, Lael R., Vicky M. Wilkins, Kenneth J. Meier, and Catherine A. Holland. 2002. Lipstick and Logarithms: Gender, Institutional Context, and Representative Bureaucracy. *American Political Science Review* 96, 553–64.

Lewis, Gregory B. 1990. In search of Machiavellian milquetoasts: Comparing attitudes of bureaucrats and ordinary people. *Public Administration Review* 50: 220–27.

McCubbins, M.D., R. G. Noll, and B. R. Weingast. 1987. Administrative procedures as instruments of political control. *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization, 3,* 243-277.

Posner, P. L. 2001. Accountability challenges of third-party government. In Lester. M. Salmon (ed.), *The tools of government: A guide to the new governance* (pp. 523-551). New York: Oxford University Press.

Selden, S. C., Gene A. Brewer, and Jeffrey Brudney. 1999. Reconciling competing values in public administration: Understanding the administrative role concept. *Administration & Society, 31*, 171-204.

Thomas, John Clayton, and Julia E. Melkers. 1999. Explaining citizen-initiated contacts with municipal bureaucrats: Lessons from the Atlanta experience. *Urban Affairs Review 34* (1999), 667-690.

Thomas, John Clayton, Theodore H. Poister, and Nevbahar Ertas. Forthcoming. "Customer, Partner, Principal: Local Government Perspectives on State Agency Performance in Georgia." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.

Van Ryzin, Gregg C., and E. Wayne Freeman. 1997. Viewing organizations as customers of government services. *Public Productivity & Management Review 20*, 419-431.

Wise, Lois Rescascino. 2004. Bureaucratic posture: On the need for a composite theory of bureaucratic behavior. *Public Administration Review 64*, 669-680.

Table 1

Response Rates for Appointed Administrators and Elected Officials

	Administrators		
	Counties	Municipalities	Total
Number Surveyed	159	504	663
Number of Completed Responses	104	300	404
Response Rate	**65%**	**60%**	**61%**
	Elected Officials		
Number Surveyed	159	504	663
Number of Completed Responses	92	308	400
Response Rate	**59%**	**61%**	**60%**

Table 2

Population Characteristics:

Respondents vs. All Jurisdictions

Administrators				
	Counties		Cities	
Population	Respondents	All	Respondents	All
Under 10,000	16.3	20.8	81.0	87.9
10,000-24,999	38.5	40.9	13.7	8.0
25,000-49,999	18.3	15.7	3.7	2.1
Greater than 50,000	26.9	22.6	1.7	2.0
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	104	159	300	535*
Mayors and County Commission Chairs				
	Counties		Cities	
Population	Respondents	Population	Respondents	Population
Under 10,000	19.6	20.8	84.1	87.9
10,000-24,999	34.8	40.9	10.5	8.0
25,000-49,999	19.6	15.7	3.9	2.1
50,000-99,999	26.1	22.6	1.2	2.0
Totals	100.1	100.0	100.1	100.0
N	92	159	307	535*

*The total of 535 cities exceeds the number of cities actually surveyed (504) apparently due to a decrease in the number of cities in Georgia between the time these population figures were reported (2000) and the date of the surveys.

Table 3

Grading of Transportation Performance

By Citizens, Local Administrators, and Top Local Elected Officials:

Summary Statistics

	Mean Grade*	Standard Dev.	High – Low District
Road Quality			
Elected	2.28	.74	.29
Admins.	2.25	.70	.21
Citizens	2.09	.78	.42
Traffic Congestion			
Elected	2.62	1.03	1.14
Admins.	2.58	.91	1.22
Citizens	2.66	1.07	.90
Safety			
Elected	2.41	.81	.33
Admins.	2.42	.81	.45
Citizens	2.07	.80	.45
Environm. Impact			
Elected	2.39	.83	1.03
Admins.	2.33	.74	.44
Citizens	2.43	.93	.66
Variety of Transp. Options			
Elected	2.91	1.05	1.18
Admins.	2.78	.91	.78
Citizens	2.70	1.10	.26
Communication			
Elected	2.70	.94	.51
Admins.	2.58	.84	.21
Citizens	2.40	.89	.33
Overall GDOT Grade			
Elected	2.62	.94	1.01
Admins.	2.54	.83	.64
Citizens	2.30	.78	.37

*Where 1=A, 2=B, 3=C, 4=D, and 5=F.

Table 3

Opinion Correspondence between Citizens

and Local Government Officials at the County Level

Road quality	All	GDOT familiar	Heavy Driver	Higher income	Non-white	Larger counties	Significant correlations
Elected	.002	.026	.062	.023	.109	-.031	0
Admin.	.013	.022	.002	.079	.031	.003	0
Conges-tion							
Elected	.236**	.264**	.239**	.209**	.187*	.181**	6
Admin.	.244**	.248**	.220**	.213**	.243**	.228**	6
Safety							
Elected	.018	.052	.006	-.135	.064	.037	0
Admin.	.036	.028	-.013	.038	.072	.019	0
Envir. impact							
Elected	.173**	.196**	.163*	.102	.089	.166**	4
Admin.	-.026	.017	-.040	-.083	-.051	.021	0
Variety transp. options							
Elected	.034	.023	.012	-.030	-.046	.044	0
Admin.	.052	.078	.075	-.029	.034	.064	0
Commu-nication							
Elected	.024	-.002	.101	-.074	-.117	-.007	0
Admin.	.034	.000	.001	-.014	.161*	.034	1
Overall GDOT grade							
Elected	.107**	.150**	.171**	.048	.072	.076	3
Admin.	.092*	.083	.087	.047	.067	.080*	2
Signif. correls.	5	4	4	2	3	4	22

Table 5

Opinion Correspondence between Citizens

and Local Government Officials at the District Level

Road quality	All	GDOT familiar	Heavy Driver	Higher income	Non-white	Familiar & heavy drivers	Significant correlations
Elected	.055	.078	.049	.128	.001	.027	0
Admins.	-.070*	-.055	-.124*	-.092	-.058	-.125	0
Conges-tion							
Elected	.245**	.241**	.257**	.180*	.268**	.217**	6
Admins.	.215**	.216**	.217**	.135	.233**	.153*	5
Safety							
Elected	.108**	.106*	.100	.092	.175*	.106	3
Admins.	.051	.059	-.005	-.030	.189*	.028	1
Envir. impact							
Elected	.174**	.215**	.142*	.050	.070	.183*	4
Admins.	.160**	.206**	.107	.003	.088	.174*	3
Variety transp. Options							
Elected	.084*	.131**	.105	-.005	-.073	.175*	3
Admins.	.086*	.120*	.106	.022	-.078	.157*	3
Commun-ication							
Elected	.023	.032	-.011	.035	-.080	.009	0
Admin.	.014	.000	-.039	.051	-.093	-.063	0
Overall GDOT grade							
Elected	.149**	.173**	.181**	.080	.154*	.216**	5
Admin.	.144**	.168**	.170**	.083	.148	.210**	4
Significant correlations	9	9	5	1	5	8	37