

**News Release****TDOT TRAFFIC COUNTS IN GALLATIN***City Officials Note Traffic During Pandemic Impacts 2021's Estimated Counts*

Gallatin – You may have noticed rubber tubes across the streets of Gallatin. These devices, called pneumatic road tube sensors, are used by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) to count cars along area roads. The data, collected at these count stations and released every year, gives local planners and traffic engineers information to make recommendations for congestion mitigation strategies.

City Engineer Nick Tuttle says traffic counts often show the difference between perception and the reality of traffic issues. “People will say something needs to be done about too much traffic on roads like Lock 4, Peach Valley or Cairo Road, but a look at the capacity of the roadway determined by common engineering metrics shows that there is still room for more. People who have lived here for 40 years understandably think traffic is crazy now compared to what it used to be, and I am one of those people!”

City officials say while the raw data is useful, there are problems with drawing quick conclusions from the raw data including the following:

2020 Pandemic – The closure of businesses and public gatherings drastically altered traffic patterns. City engineers and planners say this column (2020) is likely unreliable even after TDOT adjusted these numbers to compensate for irregular travel patterns.

Traffic Studies vs Traffic Counts – Traffic studies include more comprehensive data than gathered at a one-count station and are required with major road projects or developments. An intensive service analysis evaluates specifics of turn movement along a segment of road and times of peak use, which gives a better understanding of actual flow of traffic. Developers must often provide a comprehensive traffic study to the city before proceeding with a commercial development.

***Estimated Capacity (below in chart)** – The estimated capacity is based upon a chosen Level of Service that takes into account the volume of cars counted on a roadway and how that effects the average travel speed. Capacities are built around roadway characteristics. For example, a four lane road is going to carry more traffic than a two lane road. If a four lane road has several intersections and conflict points such as driveways, adjustments are made in the calculation.

Average Annual Daily Trips

YELLOW SHADING = Segment over capacity *2020 reflects TDOT adjustments due to the pandemic

Street	*Estimated Capacity	2021	*2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Airport Road S of US 31E	16727	9644	6101	7849	7336	6615	7098	6928	6199	6007	5169
Broadway W of Joann	17700	20807	14601	14196	15119	15080	13876	15090	13608	12781	13787
Cairo Rd. E of CSX RR	9576	2029	1674	1751	1609	1511	1437	1396	1341	1295	1238
Lock 4 Road N of Hancock	10656	9383	9094	7627	8178	8000	6919	6878	6325	6714	6518
Long Hollow Pike E of Walnut Creek St.	15540	22075	16541	18953	19380	17780	16510	16347	14900	13903	14360
Main Street W of Hume	15540	16730	15398	16520	16076	15198	13840	15450	15179	14492	13512
Nashville Pike (US 31E/SR 6) at City Limits	32400	n/a	13222	21010	21216	20530	19802	18547	18324	16403	32400
N. Water N of Franklin	11840	7191	5476	6193	6617	6037	6435	5493	5987	6030	5224
Peach Valley	9576	909	828	1325	1119	478	430	488	451	393	460

Red River Rd. W of Dorothy Jordan	15540	21725	17246	17914	17290	15268	14898	15760	14640	15019	13982
Veterans Parkway E of BSCB & W. of Green Lea	74400	48687	35179	42590	42237	38438	38155	39702	36409	29805	31540

Despite the drawbacks, city officials say TDOT's traffic counts are still an important tool to observe trends and changes to roadway volume. Tuttle says the data serves as historical markers showing the impact of new roads or mitigation measures that change the routes people take as they shop or drive to work.

"For instance, taking a look at the count on Lock 4, north of Hancock, traffic on this road used to be worse than it is now. Instead of using the 109 interchange at 31 East, people were cutting off on Hancock and going up to the signal on Lock 4 to go toward Nashville," says Tuttle. "You had some 8,000 cars on Lock 4 and then it drops when 386 is opened. Now people are going on up to Long Hollow Pike and getting on 386."

For the complete report, including additional roadway information like peak hour volumes and historic trends can be found on the TDOT at

<https://tdot.public.ms2soft.com/tcds/tsearch.asp?loc=Tdot&mod=TCDS>

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