

3.2 INTERVIEW FINDINGS

As part of this study's salary analyses, the Project Team conducted interviews with internal FDOT executive staff and Transportation Industry comparators, as described in **Chapter 2.0**, to identify key compensation issues affecting recruitment and retention within the Department. The results from these interviews are summarized in this section.

Department of Transportation Interview Findings

Overall, FDOT interviewees indicated that Department salaries are too low in comparison to the private sector and other competing agencies. Also, interviewees noted that entry-level salaries (hiring salaries or the minimum salaries set in FDOT's pay structure) are too low and not competitive. Several interviewees noted an issue of salary compression among top level executive positions due to a current cap on the Secretary of Transportation's salary.

The following are a representative sample of interviewee responses regarding the Department's compensation program.

- *Salaries are too low and are not keeping up with the cost of living.*
- *Recruiting and retaining is challenging.*
- *The 7-10 year mark is when people jump to the private sector for more money.*
- *There is a log jam among the top classifications (Section/Department heads, Director, Assistant Secretary, and Secretary).*
- *The State pay scale compares poorly with other state turnpike system positions.*
- *There is constant competition to retain agency expertise.*
- *We're bunching up at the top due to staff not being able to make more than the Secretary at \$140K.*

Transportation Industry Private Sector Interview Findings

The Project Team also conducted interviews with private sector transportation executives, some of whom are former FDOT employees, to identify key compensation issues affecting recruitment and retention. A summary of the findings from these private sector interviews follows. In general, interviewees indicated that private sector employers provide higher rates of compensation. A few key interviewee observations include:

- *In the private sector, performance is rewarded more rapidly than DOT – we receive increases based on merit.*
- *There's no question that the private sector is better in terms of a total compensation package, but it is higher risk in respect to needing to deliver profits versus the risk at FDOT, which is more political.*

- Without a doubt, it's the salary and the opportunity to increase salary that are the driving factors [for why employees leave FDOT].
- The consultant industry compensates employees better, 10-15 percent better at least.
- They [FDOT] are not competitive; folks leave all the time because the pay does not match the responsibilities.
- Compared to the private sector, the FDOT upper level administration is not well compensated for the level of work they perform.
- I can't emphasize enough that the Commission consider the District Secretary and CEO [positions] to be better compensated; their salaries are extremely low.

In the supplemental interviewee survey, interviewees were asked questions about their current salaries and the increase they received, if any, above their previous salary at FDOT. A majority of the interviewees indicated receiving a higher salary after joining the private sector compared to their previous salary at FDOT (91%, or 10 of the 11 interviewees; the one exception declined a higher salary offer).

Exhibit 3-3 displays the dollar amount and percentage increases interviewees reported receiving upon entering the private sector over their previous salaries in their last held position at FDOT.

EXHIBIT 3-3: FORMER FDOT EMPLOYEES' SALARY OVER PAST SALARY UPON ENTERING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

INTERVIEWEE	AMOUNT OVER PREVIOUS SALARY	PERCENTAGE OVER PREVIOUS SALARY
Interviewee 1:	\$ 24,000	25%
Interviewee 2:	\$ 81,000	38%
Interviewee 3:	\$ 85,750	35%
Interviewee 4:	\$ 12,000	8%
Interviewee 5:	\$ 120,000	40%
Interviewee 6:	\$ 46,000	26%
Interviewee 7:	\$ 20,000	10%
Interviewee 8:	\$ 56,000	35%
Interviewee 9:	\$ 150,000	120%
Interviewee 10:	\$ 50,000	29%
AVERAGE:	\$ 64,475	37%

Source: MGT Supplemental Interviewee Survey for Private Industry Peers, 2014. Note: N = 10.