2022 State of the Commute Survey
Response to Comments Received at Oct 19 Evaluation Group Meeting

Note that typos/some other minor changes might not be shown in the comments listed below.
The revised "short" form of the questionnaire highlights changes that were made to the questionnaire.

<u>Method</u>
C - How does the sampling method address/ensure equity and representation among the different population groups?

R - The sample is drawn disproportionately from across the 11-jurisdiction region, with targeted numbers of completed responses from each jurisdiction. After the survey is completed, each jurisdiction's raw sample is first expanded to equal the count of employed residents as reported in the American Community Survey (ACS) data. This produces a jurisdiction-specific employment expansion factor (e.g., Fairfax County) equal to the number of employed residents divided by the number of completed interviews. An additional weighting adjustment is made to reflect the age and race/ethnicity distributions to the published ACS data for each jurisdiction. The expansion/weighting steps result in a set of employed-age-race/ethnicity weighting factors (e.g., Fairfax County, Black, 18-25 years old). When the expansion/weight factors are applied to the raw data in the analysis, the "weighted" counts and percentages correctly represent the number and distribution of employed residents by jurisdiction and by age and race/ethnicity.

C – When will Commuter Connections provide SOC data to local jurisdictions

R – As in past SOCs, Commuter Connections will provide SOC datafile to jurisdictions after the SOC report has been finalized. This is expected to be in early 2023. This gives CC and the SOC contractor time to ensure that the datafiles are fully accurate.

<u>Q3 – Work location</u>
C - With so many still working from home more than they go to the office, this question may need to be reworded. I think this question is about the office location. Consider: In what county (or independent city) is your employer's office located?

R – Agree – New wording for the question is: "In what county (or independent city) do you work? If you work from home full-time now due to the coronavirus pandemic, indicate where you would work if you returned to an outside workplace."

<u>Q5 – Monday-Friday workdays</u>
C - Why is the question asking only about weekdays? Is this question needed considering later we ask how they get to work each day?

R – The SOC asks only about M-F because these are the primary commuting days when commute travel affects peak hour traffic. Data from this question is used later to check that respondents report the correct number of travel days/TW/CWS/days off in Q15

<u>Q13a, Q14d, Q14f – Telecommute / telework</u>
C - There needs to be an explanation about telecommute as well as telework. Can both be used in Questions 13a, 14d, and 14f?

R – Yes, the questionnaire has been revised to refer to "telecommute/telework."

Q14e – Telework and job responsibilities
C – Add "only" to the sentence to read: "Considering only your job responsibilities…"

R – This change was not made. We do not believe the emphasis is needed and adding emphasis to a statement can make respondents overthink the interpretation of the question, leading to confusion.

Q14k – Asking respondents who are not currently teleworking about use of telework in the past year
C - Wouldn't respondents only reach this question if they answered no to question 12 - that they DO NOT TELEWORK? If you're asking for a total number of days they teleworked during the pandemic, that should be stated clearly, recognizing that they do not currently telework.

R – Yes, this question is only for respondents who are not teleworking at the time of the survey. It has been used in this form in past SOCs to identify use of work from home among respondents who do not consider themselves "telecommuters." The question shows pre-coded grouped days categories. In previous surveys, the categories ended at "10+ days". In light of the pandemic, these categories have been expanded. The last 2 categories are now "10-30 days" and "More than 30 days (or all or most of my workdays)." This final category will give a response option for respondents who were primarily teleworking in the past year and are not teleworking at the time of the survey.

Q15 – Modes by day of the week – several comments
C1 - Why not add Saturday and Sunday?

R – The survey does not include S/S because these are not typical commute days for most respondents; M-F are the workdays/commute days that are of primary interest for congestion and air quality analyses. Additionally, past experience with adding S/S to the grid has shown that it encourages respondents who do not work on S/S to provide modes that they use for non-work trips. This requires additional instructions and prompts to respondents to ensure they respond only for the M-F workdays.

C2 - This table doesn't allow for multimodal answers so we need to have follow up questions to ask about the use of other modes (e.g. transit and bike, transit and walk, SOV and VRE, VRE and Metrorail and walk, etc.

R – Correct. The point of this grid is to identify the mode used for the longest distance part of the trip. Other questions are used to add the detail on access to transit/CP/VP. Note that the grid does include an "other" option, which respondents who want to provide additional detail can use. In past SOCs, some respondents did use this option, but in nearly all cases, their responses were able to be coded back into one of the individual categories.

C15 – Various changes to mode names
C/R – Add telework to "telecommute"? – yes
C/R – Add limo to taxi? – not changed
C/R – Should public bus be grouped with private shuttles? – no change. The bus mode does not specify that the shuttles are necessarily private.
C/R – Does "other" include light rail/trolley – Respondents may write this in as other if they choose.
C/R – Add jog or roll (e.g., wheelchair) to walk – no change. Respondents may write this in as other if they choose.
C/R – Delete "work all day at home" from telecommute option, since some may be teleworking from a location other than home - yes

Q15d – Occupants in vehicle when using UberPool, Uber Express Pool, Via

C – Note: UberPool has been suspended since the start of the pandemic.
   https://www.uber.com/us/en/ride/uberpool/ It is not clear whether Uber Express Pool has been
   suspended as well because you can still sign up for the service.
   https://www.uber.com/us/en/ride/express-pool/

R – Not changed, since UP might be back in operation at the time of the survey.

Q15e – Current travel about the same as pre-pandemic or different.

C – Is this in regards to mode choice, length of commute time? Is this a short answer response field?

R – This question is a yes/no response. Respondents whose answers would be obvious (e.g., telework
   full-time now and did not TW full-time before pandemic) are autocoded. This question is used to
   identify if respondents feel they have made a substantial change in their commute. Their answers
   are used to guide later wording in some questions.

Q15f – List of changes respondents might have made in response to pandemic.

C – This seems to ask the same question as 15e.

R – No, it provides more detail on a range of changes. Additionally, some not all respondents will have
   been asked Q15e, qhile Q15f is asked of all respondents.

Q15h – Modes used before the pandemic

C – Check these modal categores based on the earlier comments from Q. 15. Perhaps the answer table
   should be the same as the table in 15 where we ask what the primary mode was each day of the
   week. That may help with comparisons.

R – This question is not designed to be an exact comparison with Q15. It's purpose is to provide a
   general overview of travel prior to the pandemic. The list of modes is compressed to make the
   question look less complicated.

Q15m – Distance to usual workplace – two comments

C1 – It may be difficult for repsondents to accurately estimate distance. Should this be changed to a
   closed response question?

R – No, the question has been used in this form for many SOC surveys. It is true that some respondents
   do not know the distance, but about 85% to 90% typically do provide a number of miles.

C2 – Is this asking about home to the office, even if they aren't going to the office? No mileage if they
   work from home, but I'm not sure if that is what we want here.

R – Agreed. This is now two separate questions. Respondents who are working from home full-time will
   be asked: "You said you are working from home full-time now. How many miles is it one-way from
   your home to where you would work if you were not working from home?"

Q17a – Arrival time at work

C – Should this be "start work" rather than "arrive at work"?

R – No, this question is designed to indicate when respondents are traveling to work. If respondents
   arrive at work well before their official start time, for whatever personal or business reason, the
   important travel issue still is when they are actually traveling.

Q34 – Q44 – Add telework to "Telecommute"
C – See earlier comment about using the work telework. Should this be Telecommuting/Teleworking?

R – Agreed – change has been made

Q42 – Source of information about telework
C – Part of the question includes obtaining info "from the following sources." What are those sources?
    With #42 worded the way it is, do we still need #43? I assume Commuter Connections and MWCOG
    are sources in #42. Also, I'd like to try to see if anyone recalls receiving telecommuting/telework info
    from Telework!VA, (Telework Virginia) which may include VDOT or DRPT. (Some folks think DRPT is
    VDOT.)

R – Q42 shows a list of options. MWCOG/Commuter Connections is not included on the list, although
    some respondents might write it in "other." Telework!VA has been added to the Q42 list. Q43 is a
    question that has been used in past SOCs for the analysis of regional telework. For consistency, it
    will still be asked as before.

Q45 – Major roads used by CP/VP/transit riders for commuting.
C – Do we need to ask this questions> What do we do with the information? If we don't need it, delete
    the question.

R – COG needs to keep this quesiton for analysis purposes (pertinent to our ability to show our
    effectiveness on major corridors).

Q46 - HOV and express lanes
C – Add toll lane to the list

R – Yes, this change was made in all places that HOV lane or Express lanes was used

Q56 – Reasons for not using CP/VP
C – Should we find out if the coronavirus was a factor in not carpooling or vanpooling? Similar to #53
    about transit.

R – The question series for transit was different – it asked about past transit use and if the pandemic
    was a factor in stopping past use of transit. However, COG agrees with this change so see the new
    questions Q55, Q55a, Q55b, similar to the transit questions

Q56f and Q57 – Satisfaction with commute to work
C – The level of working from home is going to have a considerable influence on the answer to these
    questions. I wonder if "trip to work" needs to be "trip to the office"?

R – This question is asked only of respondents who travel to an outside workplace 1+ days per week.

Q60a – Location of home/work prior to a move
C – Does this need to be defined in a geogrpahic sense since we are really interested in the non-
    attainment region.

R – No, the response categories make this clear (in Washington metropolitan region, in MD outside
    WMR, in VA outside WMD, other). However, this series has been changed to ask about home and
    work moves separately and respondents who are working from home FT due to the pandemic will
    be asked a slightly different form of the work location change question. FYI, a similar change was
    made in Q60f about the change shortening the distance to work for respondents who are currently
    FT TW

Q81/Q82/Q83 – Numbers/websites to obtain commute information
C – Add "mobile app" to the possible types of commute information outlets

R – Yes

Q88d/e – Names of local jurisdiction commute assistance programs – two comments
C1 -The question does not represent all Commuter Connections network members. That is because only
    residents in the MSA are surveyed. I get that, but the other commuter assistance programs feel left
    out. I don't know what we can do for them, though.

R – We understand, but the survey is for the non-attainment area only.

C2 – Fairfax County also has 6 Connector Stores which could be confused with Arlington's The
    Commuter Store. The commuter stores aren't really a commuter assistance program. They are
    outlets. Metro has sales outlets, but they are not included. Maybe we should not include
    commuter/transit stores. Plus, the operators of the commuter/transit stores have their own
    measurements for customer visits and usage.

R – Agreed, commute stores and commuter sub-area program names have been removed. In all cases,
    only the main program name will be shown. Note FFX name has been changed to be the current
    name.

Q89 – Employer services – Several comments
C1 – Add "or benefit" Adding the word "benefit' helps align with #89b. Plus, not all employers use
    SmartBenefits to provide the benefit. Or the options in #89b could be added to #89 and #89b can be
    deleted. I prefer that option, just put it all in one question.
R – "Benefits" has been added to the response 3. But Q89b will remain as a follow-up question to avoid
    making the Q89 list more complicated.

C2 – Could we allow the respondent to add other employer services/benefits? Bike racks/lockers,
    showers, money for purchase of a bike, real-time transit info. etc.

R – No, COG does not want to make this list longer.

C3 – Response 6 – GRH. I feel like people are sometimes confusing an employer provided GRH program
    with the Commuter Connections GRH program.

R – We agree, but did not make any changes in this response

Q105a – travel/trip apps
C – It would be good to ask where they get their news about traffic or travel. The answers would show
    what news sources to target for marketing. What apps are being listed? There are so many we can't
    list them all. Should this be an open response question?

R – The purpose of the question is not to identify individual apps – e.g., Waze vs Google Maps – but the
    types of apps that are being used. The Q105a list has a comprehensive set of categories, with
    examples of each.

Q106 – driverless cars

C – Re, the use of the term "autonomous cars". We have evolved to using the term "automated" vehicles instead of "autonomous", to match national discussions. If you found that using the term "autonomous" was successful in your survey responses, by all means continue to use it, but I thought I would point out that we had made this change. Thanks

R – See the change to "autonomous cars" in this question.

Q106, a,b and c – driverless cars

C – I suggest deleting these questions. Fully autonomous cars are further in the future than originally thought. I don't see what use we would have for this information. If we really want to get into this area, then we would need to ask about autonomous transit, vanpools or shuttles. (Fairfax County conducted a pilot autonomous shuttle.) If we ask about autonomous vehicles we should also ask about microtransit and micro mobility options. Mirotransit is being tested now (DRPT has a couple of projects in the works.) and micro mobility is here. We would get more useful information out of asking about microtransit and micro mobility than autonomous vehicles. That would make the survey longer, and I think we are trying to avoid lengthening the survey.

R – These questions were asked in the 2019 SOC and CC wants to retain them for comparison purposes and to set a new baseline for the awareness and concerns about driverless cars

Demographics

C – May want to include a "decline to state" option for sensitive demographic questions such as race/ethnicity, income, etc.

R – All of the demographic questions provide a "prefer not to answer" option. Additionally, respondents may simply skip to the next question if they want.

Q110a (now Q110b) – number of employees at worksite

C- Suggest providing options as some employees may not know the specific answer.

R – The question already was categories, as in past SOC surveys

Q113 – Number of household vehicles – 2 comments

C1 – Would this include company vehicles? may want to clarify.

R – Yes, it could include a company vehicle. We added this reference

C2 – Could we break out #113 by vehicle type? It might be good to separate motorcycles from cars, vans and trucks.

R – No, this would make the question more complicated than necessary for the SOC purpose.

Q114 – Number of household members

C – May want to clarify those that should be excluded from the household count, such as children living away from home.

R – The question was changed to "How many persons live in your home at the present time?"

Q122 – Latino/Hispanic/Spanish

C – Some may prefer a gender-neutral term such as Latinx (e.g. Latino/a/x

R – Agreed, change has been made

Q124 – Income under $100K or $100K or more

C – What is the 100K based on? How will this information be used? Why have #124 if we ask for their income category in #124a/b? Same question about the use of $100,000 as a cutoff. Let's see what the average household income is for the region. It may be more informative to use that number. (e.g. 30% of households earning less than the region's average household income have at least one person that uses transit. That percentage drops to 10% for households above the region's average income.)

R – The purpose of the $100K question is three-fold. Some respondents are willing to give this broad level of income detail, but not additional breakdowns as asked in Q124a and Q124b. Q124 gives the above/below breakdown. A second reason is to allow a large number of income categories below $100K. The third reason is to keep the number of income categories that a respondent sees manageable.