

ITEM 14 - Information

January 17, 2007

Briefing on the Regional Household Travel Survey

Staff

Recommendation: Receive briefing on the regional household travel survey methodology and results of the pre-test survey pilot program.

Issues: None

Background: During 2007 approximately 10,000 households will be surveyed to collect detailed information on the socio-economic characteristics and travel behavior of persons residing in the Washington region and adjacent jurisdictions.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

MEMORANDUM

January 11, 2007

To: Transportation Planning Board

From: Robert E. Griffiths,
Technical Services Director, DTP

Subject: 2007 Household Travel Survey

Summary

A methodologically advanced household travel survey for the metropolitan Washington region is about to begin. The services of a nationally recognized transportation survey research firm have been retained to recruit and obtain the participation of 10,000 randomly selected households in this survey. Households agreeing to participate in this survey will be asked to record and report on the travel of each household member for a specified 24-hour period. The data collected in this survey will be used to analyze changes in daily travel behavior and to update the TPB's demand forecasting model.

Household travel survey interviews will be conducted over a 12-month period beginning in January 2007 and ending in January 2008. Between 800 and 900 survey interviews are expected to be completed each month. Survey interviews will be conducted in both English and Spanish and the survey procedures have been designed to make this survey as representative as possible of all population groups in the metropolitan region.

Background

The TPB periodically conducts regional household travel surveys to obtain detailed information about the socio-economic characteristics and travel behavior of persons living in the metropolitan region. This information is used to develop and calibrate new regional travel demand forecasting models. These forecasting models, once calibrated and validated, are then used to predict future travel demands based on projected household and employment growth and assumed changes to the regional transportation system. The last large scale regional household survey of this type for the Washington region was conducted more than a decade ago.

The services of a nationally recognized transportation survey research firm, NuStats, have been retained to conduct the 2007 TPB Household Travel Survey (2007 HTS). NuStats has conducted more than 75 regional household travel surveys in metropolitan areas through the United States. NuStats is headquartered in Austin, Texas and has a local office in Alexandria, VA. NuStats has been contracted to elicit the participation of 10,000 randomly selected households in this methodologically enhanced household survey. All jurisdictions in the TPB region and adjacent areas will be included in this survey.

The conduct of the 2007 HTS will use survey protocols that were thoroughly tested and refined based on pre-test of the survey methodology conducted in the fall of 2006. The enhanced methodological procedures to be used in this survey are designed to make this survey as representative as possible of all population groups in the metropolitan region and to minimize the adverse effects of non-response bias and the misreporting of daily travel behavior that have been found in traditional Random Digit Dialing (RDD) telephone-based travel surveys. TPB staff will manage and supervise the survey consultant to ensure that all survey procedures and protocols are being correctly carried out and ensure overall quality control.

Survey Methodology

The sampling frame for the 2007 TPB Household Travel Survey (2007 HTS) will be a current listing of all deliverable city and rural route residential postal addresses for the TPB modeled area. A random sample of the addresses in the sampling frame will be drawn by jurisdiction and area type within jurisdiction. Advance letters will be mailed to the randomly selected households informing them that their household has been randomly selected to participate in the 2007 HTS and providing them with some basic information about the survey. Seven days after the advance letter mailing households with listed telephone numbers will be contacted by telephone and asked to provide some basic information about their household and asked to participate in the 2007 HTS. Households with unpublished telephone numbers (including cell phone only households) choosing to participate in the survey will be asked to provide their phone number via a short mail-back household questionnaire that will be included with their advance letter. These household will be able to respond via a toll-free number or secure website set up for this purpose. Households not responding to the initial mailing will be sent reminder postcards after 10, 20, and 30 days.

All households agreeing to participate in the 2007 HTS will be mailed a survey packet with a travel diary for each household member to record their travel for a specified 24-hour period. The day after the household's scheduled travel day, the participating household will be contacted by telephone and asked to report the information recorded in their diary as well as any other trips they made on that day that may have not been recorded in the travel diaries. Follow-up calls will be made to the household if they cannot be reached the day after their travel day.

The 2007 HTS will always also include a non-respondent follow-up (NRFS) study and a Global Positioning System (GPS) vehicle data collection study as subcomponents of this survey.

Schedule

Household travel survey interviews will be conducted over a 12-month period beginning in January 2007 and ending in January 2008. Between 800 and 900 survey interviews are expected to be completed each month. Data collected in this survey will be further processed, tabulated and analyzed starting in January 2008 and a preliminary findings report will be completed by June 2008.