



2005 Origin-Destination Survey

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *What is the Origin-Destination Survey?*

The survey is an initiative to collect current and reliable information about trip patterns and travel choices of area residents. At least 25,000 randomly selected households in the National Capital Region will be contacted and asked to participate in a 10-minute confidential telephone interview. Participants will be notified by mail before being called. Origin-destination surveys are an important resource for transportation planners throughout the National Capital Region.

2. *Who is conducting the survey?*

The survey is a joint project of TRANS — a transportation planning committee that includes the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, the transport ministries of Quebec and Ontario, the National Capital Commission, and the public transit operators of both Ottawa and the Outaouais (OC Transpo and Société de transport de l'Outaouais.) TRANS members have been working together for the last 25 years to co-ordinate transportation planning throughout the National Capital Region. This is the third Origin-Destination Survey the Committee has carried out. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd., one of Canada's largest independent research and evaluation firms, has been hired by the TRANS Committee to carry out the survey.

3. *What is the purpose of this survey?*

Origin-destination surveys are used worldwide to understand the ever-changing transportation needs of large communities. Information about where people go, as well as why, when and how they choose to get there is an important resource for transportation planners on both sides of the Ottawa River. The dramatic growth of the region over the last 10 years requires planners to seek a detailed picture of today's trip patterns and travel choices, which means communicating directly with a broad sampling of residents. The information collected will be used to plan roads, transit infrastructure and services, and cycling facilities.

4. *What kinds of questions will residents be asked? In what language?*

Questions will be asked in either English or French and will focus on three areas:

- (1) the participant's household (type of building, number of people, number of vehicles)
- (2) people living in the household (age, gender, do they drive, address of where they work or go to school)
- (3) specific travel questions (Participants will be asked to provide information about all trips made the previous day by each person in the house, describing the trip's purpose, type of transportation used, and time of trip. Specific trip information will only be collected for household members 11 years of age and older.)

5. How is the information being collected?

About 25,000 households throughout the National Capital Region—approximately 5% of the population—will be randomly selected to participate through confidential telephone interviews in the Origin-Destination Survey. Participants will be asked questions about all trips made on the previous day by each person in the household. In addition, some statistical information will be asked including age, gender, employment status, and number of vehicles available to the household.

6. Does the survey take into account the different areas of the National Capital Region?

The Origin-Destination Survey seeks to collect information on trip patterns in rural areas, growing suburbs, mature neighbourhoods and downtown areas alike. A 5% sample overall is a very good representation of the entire National Capital Region. The region has been further divided into some 20 districts, with associated quotas of responses to be obtained within each one.

7. What is the cost of the survey? Who is paying?

The TRANS Committee member agencies are sharing the \$1 million survey costs. Municipal funding accounts for 20% (City of Ottawa \$150,000, City of Gatineau \$25,000, and STO \$25,000); provincial funding accounts for 60% (Ontario \$450,000, Quebec \$150,000); and federal funding accounts for 20% (National Capital Commission \$200,000.)

8. How are the survey participants selected?

The 25,000 households participating in the survey will be chosen through their telephone number, which will be randomly selected from a confidential list supplied by telephone service companies. This random selection will be guided only by geography, with pre-determined levels of representation required for various areas of the region. In total, five per cent of the population will be sampled.

9. When will the survey take place?

The Origin-Destination Survey will be conducted over a 10-week period this fall, from September 19 to November 25. A true 'snapshot' of trip patterns in the region is best obtained with as short a survey period as possible. However, with today's active lifestyles some residents are highly mobile and unlikely to be reached on the first attempt. The survey period must therefore be long enough for these participants to be properly represented in the survey responses, as well as to account for situations that could have a significant effect on regular trip patterns, such as elections, labour strikes or other special events. Results of the survey will be made public by mid-2006.

10. Why is the survey taking place in the fall?

The period from mid-September to late November was specifically chosen for the Origin-Destination Survey because trip patterns during this period are typically more stable than any other time of the year. People have returned from summer vacations and are back to regular work routines. Schools are back in session and residents of all age groups have resumed their fall/winter recreation activities. Trip patterns during this period are least likely to be influenced by inclement weather, Christmas shopping or vacations.

11. How can residents be assured this is a legitimate survey? How will they know a genuine Origin-Destination Survey interviewer is calling?

Residents selected to participate in the survey will be notified by mail about the telephone survey and encouraged to participate. When the interviewer calls, the words *Origin-Destination* will appear on the telephone call display. Residents who wish to verify the survey's legitimacy, are encouraged to call the Origin-Destination Call Centre at 613-688-5050. This phone number will be well publicized in all of the promotional materials. It will also be prominent on the Web sites of the City of Ottawa (ottawa.ca), Ville de Gatineau (ville.gatineau.qc.ca), and local police departments, as well as the Web sites of all TRANS Committee member agencies.

12. How large an area is being surveyed?

The 25,000 households that will be asked to participate have been randomly selected from an area that closely corresponds to the National Capital Region, encompassing the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, plus a portion of the Municipalité régionale de comté des Collines de l'Outaouais.

13. How can I be assured the information is truly confidential? What happens to the data afterwards?

Confidentiality and long-term security of the information collected during the survey is guaranteed. Professional, screened interviewers will enter survey responses into a highly secure computer system. There is limited access to the information once it is entered. Trip information will not be collected for household members under the age of 11. The information from one household is combined with other responses from the participant's area and is collected in such a way that no personal information can be traced back to a specific household. Survey data will be used exclusively for transportation planning and can only be transferred with authorization by all six of the member agencies. Any arrangement to provide public information related to the data would be subject to the *Access to Information Act* and *Privacy Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

14. How was the information from the 1995 Origin-Destination Survey used?

Each Origin-Destination Survey is a fundamental source of information to planners. The 1995 survey was no exception. Responses to the survey provided information for road improvements (such as Innes Road, Hunt Club Road and Terry Fox Road) and various transit undertakings (such as studies for the O-Train expansion and the Rapibus, the identification of the transit priority network and detailed service planning).

15. Why is the 2005 Origin-Destination Survey being done by telephone?

Ottawa's first travel survey was conducted by telephone interviews in 1977. The mail-back method was tested for the 1986 survey, with a resulting decision to return to telephone interviews in 1995. In 2005, telephone surveys are the method of choice for data collection in both Canada and the United States. They have proven to be more cost-effective, yield a better response rate, and also provide better quality data because of the direct personal contact with survey respondents.