



2011 National Capital Region Travel 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 daily travel choices of area residents. Participation is voluntary. Confidential telephone interviews will be used to gather that data from at least 25,000 randomly selected households throughout the National Capital Region. Participants will be notified by mail before being called. The survey itself only takes 10 minutes, but its results will be a valuable source for transportation planners for years to come.

2. *What kind of information is being collected, and how?*

The Origin-Destination survey is being conducted by brief telephone interviews with residents in 25,000 randomly selected households throughout the National Capital Region – approximately five per cent of the population. Participants will be asked questions about all trips made on the previous day by each person in the household. That means walking, cycling, driving – even rollerblading – would all be relevant, as long as the trip has an origin, a destination, and a purpose. Walking around the block, or other trips classified as exercise, will be excluded. In addition, some statistical information will be sought including age, gender, employment status, and number of vehicles available to the household.

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, why they go there, when and how they choose to get there is an important resource for transportation planners on both sides of the Ottawa River. The growth in the region over the last six 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/pedestrian facilities.

4. *How are the survey participants selected?*

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

5. *When will the survey take place?*

The Origin-Destination survey will be conducted over a 12-week period this fall, from September 19 to December 10. Interviewers will call on Tuesday through Friday, between 4.30 pm and 9.30 pm and on Saturday, between 10 am and 5 pm. 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 such 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. When all telephone interviews have been completed, the production and distribution of the results will extend from December 2011 to December 2012.

6. *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 ages 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.

7. *Who is conducting this survey?*

The Origin-Destination survey is a joint project of the TRANS Committee participant organizations — including the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, the ministère des Transports du Québec, and the public transit operators of both Ottawa and the Outaouais (OC Transpo and STO). TRANS members have been working together for the last 32 years to co-ordinate transportation planning throughout the National Capital Region. This is the fourth Origin-Destination survey. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd., one of Canada's largest independent research and evaluation firms, has been hired to carry out the survey.

8. *What is the cost of the survey? Who is paying?*

The TRANS Committee participant organizations are sharing the \$1 million survey costs. Municipal funding accounts for 32 per cent (City of Ottawa \$252,000, City of Gatineau and STO \$60,000), and provincial funding accounts for 68 per cent (Ontario \$468,000, Quebec \$180,000).

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

Residents selected to participate in the survey will receive official notification by mail informing them of the telephone survey and encouraging their participation. 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), the Ville de Gatineau (ville.gatineau.qc.ca), and local police departments, as well as the web sites of some TRANS Committee member organizations.

10. What kinds of questions are residents asked? In what language?

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

- (1) Questions about the participant's household (type of building, number of people, number of vehicles)
- (2) Questions about people living in the house (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 time, purpose, and type of transportation used. Specific trip information will only be collected for household members five years of age and older.)

11. What if I did not travel on the survey day?

Those residents who do not travel on the survey day are just as important as those who do. When you are contacted to do the survey, your answers will help build a picture of the local travel patterns of the population as a whole.

12. Why are children included in the survey?

We need a thorough understanding of trip patterns made by all age groups in each community. A good understanding of trip patterns by children, such as school trips and after-school trips, will contribute to better transit planning and improved neighbourhood design policies that relate to non-motorized trips. The survey also helps us to better understand certain trips made by parents, such as dropping children off or picking them up.

Data collections reflecting the travel patterns and needs of all users will result in a better planned and more efficient transportation network.

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 enter survey responses into a highly secure computer system. There is limited access to the responses once entered, even for the interviewers themselves. 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 from all six member organizations. Any arrangement to provide public information related to the data would be subject to the federal *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 large an area within the National Capital Region is being surveyed?

The 25,000 households that will participate have been randomly selected from an area that encompasses the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, plus a portion of the Municipalité régionale de comté des Collines de l'Outaouais. The Origin-Destination Survey will collect information on trip patterns in rural areas, growing suburbs, mature neighbourhoods and downtown areas alike. A five per cent sample overall is a very good representation of the entire National Capital Region. The region will be further divided into some 42 districts, with associated quotas of responses to be obtained within each one.

15. How was the information from the 2005 Origin-Destination survey used?

Each Origin-Destination survey is a fundamental source of information to planners. The 2005 survey was no exception. The results were used for road improvements (such as the Environmental Assessment for new Interprovincial Bridge, Prince of Wales Road and Strandherd Bridge) and various transit undertakings (such as Downtown Ottawa Transit Tunnel, Interprovincial Transit Strategy, Ottawa Western Light Rail Corridor and Hospital Transit Link and the STO Rapibus).

16. Why is the 2011 Origin-Destination survey being done by telephone?

Ottawa's first travel survey was conducted by telephone interview in 1977. The mail-back method was tested for the 1986 survey, with a resulting decision to return to telephone interviews in 1995 and 2005. In 2011, telephone surveys are the method of choice for data collection in both Canada and the United States. They have proven to be cost-effective, and also provide excellent quality data because of the direct personal contact with survey respondents.