

# **SACOG REGION HOUSEHOLD TRAVEL SURVEY**

## **PROJECT**

Conduct a household travel survey of residents in the SACOG region.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

Household travel surveys (HTS) are used by MPOs and other agencies for several important transportation analysis functions, but with a common core need: to better understand how individuals weigh different travel options, and what factors influence their travel choices.

One key use of HTS is for developing, calibrating and updating the regional travel demand models used by MPOs for transportation forecasting and regional and local transportation planning. For this purpose, HTS must include in survey samples a sufficiently broad and diverse set of households and individuals, and the modes of travel they use, to capture how demographic factors (age, income, ethnicity, household size, etc.) affect travel choices. In recent years, new vehicle choices are increasingly becoming available, including zero- or low- emission vehicles and potentially driver-less or driver-assisted cars. New modes of travel are also taking hold, such as car-sharing, bike sharing, and other technology-driven ride-sharing options like Uber and Lyft. Observations on generational changes in multimodal travel and vehicle ownership, such as millennials delaying getting their driver's licenses or purchasing their first car, are common in the media, and an increasing amount of anecdotal and spot-survey data suggest these differences from Baby Boomers or Generation X may continue long term. The HTS is the only way MPOs can assemble rich, detailed information from a robust sample of individuals within their regions in order to make any sense of these emergent issues in personal travel and, ultimately, to include these factors in the travel forecasts they make.

## **BENEFITS TO THE REGION**

The HTS is critical to maintaining currency of travel forecasting and analysis tools, and to fully reflect recent changes in demographics, travel options and values in the analysis of long and short range transportation plans. The state and Federal movement toward performance based planning and decision making critically depends on these modeling and analysis tools.

SACOG's ability to meet both federal and state statutory requirements for metropolitan planning, travel demand modeling, and Clean Air Act emissions analysis depend on periodic updates of the HTS and the agency's travel demand models.

## **INNOVATIVE APPROACH**

SACOG is partnering with three other large MPO's (Southern California Association of Governments, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and San Diego Association of Governments) to develop and test a common HTS instrument and process. This joint survey design and testing effort will allow for exchange of HTS information across the regions, maximize opportunities to coordinate on model development, and minimize the cost and effort needed to administer the HTS. As part of this joint effort, new technologies for collecting and validating HTS data will be evaluated and utilized. A Caltrans Discretionary Planning Grant is helping to cover costs of the design phase, along with MPO contributions.

## **SURVEY ADMINISTRATION COSTS AND FUNDING**

SACOG's last HTS was conducted in 2000. Data from that survey was utilized to develop SACSIM, SACOG's current travel demand model and the first demand simulation model to be used by an MPO for statutory analysis. The 2000 HTS collected data from about 4,000 households in the region (an 0.5% sample), at a cost of \$450,000. The survey was funded through a mix of funding sources: Caltrans Discretionary Grant (\$150,000); TDA Planning (\$90,000); and FHWA P/L funding (\$210,000).

Such household surveys have a long history and are conducted in many, many regions around the country. Average costs to administer an HTS vary, but recent surveys have averaged \$150 to \$250 per household. Assuming this likely cost range, a regional survey effort that maintains or slightly expands the sampling rate of the 2000 survey would cost between \$600,000 and \$1,200,000.