

TDM EVALUATION UPDATES AND DISCUSSION

Preparing for future data collection and evaluation

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Commuter Connections Subcommittee
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Project Overview

- **Commuter Connections' programming** to be evaluated during the triennial review:
 - Maryland Telework Assistance
 - Employer Outreach
 - Regional Marketing
 - Commuter Program Operations
- **Objective of the evaluation:** Provide timely and meaningful information on the performance of each program element to decision-makers and other groups.

Updates

Retention Rate Survey

Survey

- Survey closed June 30
- 1.9% response rate (~650 responses)

Schedule for Commuter Connections Subcommittee review and endorsement

- **January 2027:** Receive presentation and draft report
- **March 2027:** Request for endorsement

TDM Evaluation Analyses

Evaluation progress

- Data collection complete
- Analysis and reporting underway

Subcommittee review and endorsement

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Commuter Connections Dashboard Updates and Technical Support

- New task to be completed Fall/Winter 2026 to update and continue to build out Commuter Connections Dashboard, to include:
 - Develop data download feature.
 - Plan and implement updates to improve back-end data access, sharing, and dashboard performance.
 - Four months of technical support post-updates.
- Ridematching Committee will also receive updates on the dashboard in subsequent meetings.

Looking Ahead to Future Evaluations

Opportunities to revamp data collection and evaluation methods

Overview

- A new TDM evaluation cycle is set to begin in 2027, presenting an opportunity to get a head start on updating the evaluation methodology.
- Survey response rates have declined over time (for Commuter Connections and other survey research efforts).
- Reliable data collection and sound reporting methods remain imperative to completing the TDM evaluation. Options for revised methods include, but are not limited to microsurveys, dashboards, and the new OneCommute software—we'll talk about these today.
- Subcommittee members are invited to share feedback and input as we consider how data collection and program evaluation methods may evolve going forward.

Overarching Trend: Response Rates Declining

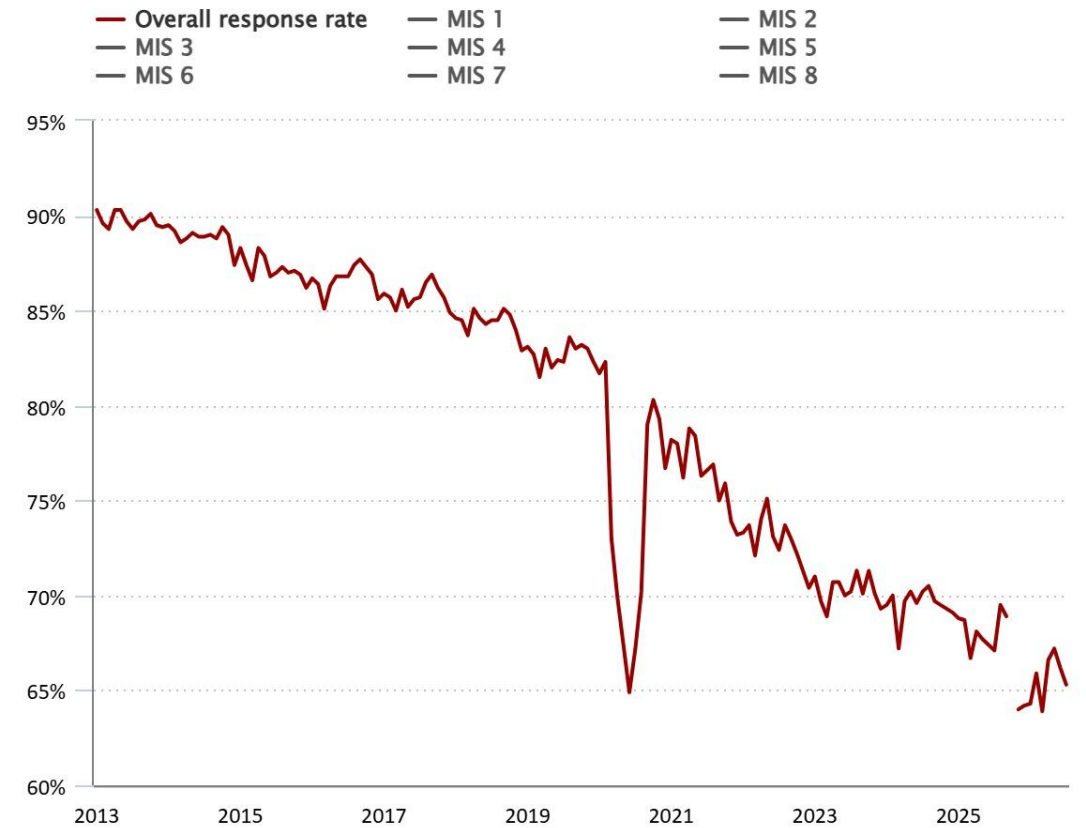
“Declining response rates are a growing concern for the [Census Bureau Current Population Survey] as well as many other surveys.”

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

“Declining survey participation, both in the U.S. and abroad, is often raised as a large challenge for the statistical system and cited as a reason to eliminate surveys in favor of other measurement strategies.”

Source: Brookings

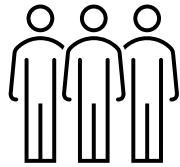
CPS response rates, overall response rate and response rates by month in sample (MIS)



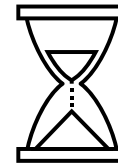
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Possible Reasons for Declining Response Rates

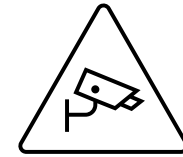
Overarching reasons cited by Brookings:



Difficulty contacting individuals
chosen for the sample

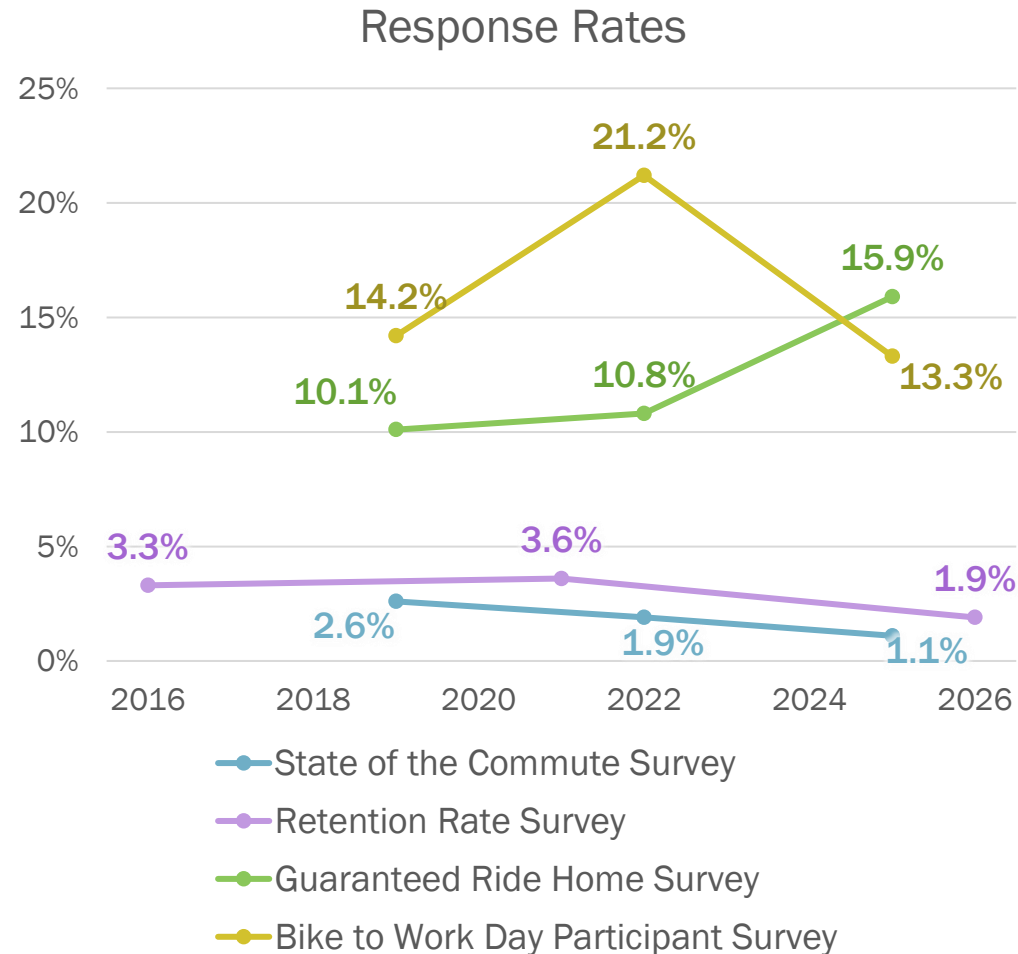


Perceived time burden



Privacy concerns

Commuter Connections Survey Response Rates



- While trends over time are mixed...
 - Three data points per survey may not be enough to establish any trends.
 - There are variations in survey population and data collection methods.
 - Pandemic interference may differ for each survey.
- There has been a clear steady decline in the response rate for the State of the Commute (SOC) Survey, the one survey that is conducted using a randomized sample. **Today's evaluation and data collection discussion is for program evaluation elements only; the SOC is independent of the TDM Analysis.**

Possibly Related: Telephone Refusal Rates Rising

- Telephone refusal rates are the share of contacts who answer the phone but decline to participate. Commuter Connections surveys conducted over the phone have seen rising telephone refusal rates:
 - GRH Participant Survey
 - **1.2-2.6%** in 2016, 2019, 2022
 - **5.4%** in 2025
 - Retention Rate Survey
 - **2.0%** in 2016
 - **3.5%** in 2021
 - **4.3%** in 2026
- Increase over time is an indication of program participants being less interested in and/or willing to take surveys over the phone or at all.

Data Precision and Declining Survey Response Rates

Is this a problem?

It could be. Data precision could worsen with declining response rates, especially for under-sampled populations. It is also likely that responses to traditional survey methods will continue to decline over time.

What are we doing about it?

Data precision can be (and has been) maintained through:

- Defining disproportionately larger samples (oversamples) based on previous lower response rates.
- Conducting multiple rounds of sampling.
- Establishing appropriate adjustment/weighting efforts.

Proactively Exploring New and Alternative Data Collection and Reporting Methods

- Opportunity to plan for new data collection methods and performing evaluation on a more frequent basis that is less tied to a three-year turnaround.
- The new implemented Commuter Connections dashboard allows for more continuous program monitoring which could potentially play a role in more continuous evaluation.
- CommuterCash app is more established now than it was three years ago, including implementing some microsurveys (more to come on that).
- OneCommute CRM system is being customized to meet the needs of Commuter Connections and its partners in terms of data collection, storage, and reporting.

Introduction to Microsurveys

- Microsurveys are surveys that are relatively **short and easy to answer**, accessible via **channels respondents are already interacting with**, oftentimes with **incentives**.
 - For example, after completing a certain action in an app, a user is prompted to complete a **5-question survey within the app** to **earn app points**.
- In comparison, most current Commuter Connections survey efforts use more traditional methods including emailing links to longer surveys and conducting surveys over the phone. Incentives are typically included in the form of a chance to win a gift card.

Microsurvey Approach

Explore using the CommuterCash app and/or users' Commuter Connections accounts as the starting point for microsurveys.

- Ties responses to existing demographic data...
 - Reducing the number of questions needed on each survey.
 - Allows staff to look back at a user's past responses tied to their account.
- Takes users to substantive questions more quickly, which may increase response rates.
- Switching data collection methods would take careful planning to ensure the necessary data for conducting impact analysis is still collected and that mode effects are minimized (changing a data collection mode can inherently impact the results just by the change of the mode).

This year's task is to develop the methodology and implementation plan.

Microsurvey Example Implementation: GRH

	Current Data Collection via GRH Participant Survey	Example Microsurvey Implementation using CommuterCash
Cadence	Conducted every three years.	Many options for survey cadence, including at a regular interval (e.g., annually) or following certain user interactions with Commuter Connections, such as registering or re-registering for GRH, taking a GRH trip, etc.
Survey notification method	Survey link sent via email or survey team placed phone call.	Users could be notified via a combination of app push notifications, alerts within the app, and emails.
Survey completion method	Completed via emailed link or phone call.	Survey could be staged in the app or through an external survey tool.
Survey length	46 questions; took 11 minutes to complete on average.	Could significantly reduce the number of questions and time it would take to complete—user responses would be tied to their CommuterCash account, providing demographic and geographic info the survey wouldn't need to ask.

Microsurvey in Action: goDMV Commuter Competition

Implemented microsurveys in 2026 with opportunities for more targeted microsurveying in the future.

A smartphone screen displaying the goDMV Commuter Competition microsurvey. The app header shows the "CommuterCash" logo. The survey title is "goDMV Commuter Competition". The first question is "What is your typical commute mode?" with a text input field containing "Carpool". The second question is "In the last 30 days, how often did you use commute options other than driving alone (bike, walk, bus, rail, carpool, telework, etc.)?" with a text input field containing "1-2 Days". The third question is "What would motivate you most to log trips during the goDMV Commuter Competition?" with a "SELECT ALL THAT APPLY" button and six options: "BONUS POINTS IN COMMUTERCASH", "GRAND PRIZE", "SPONSORED RAFFLE PRIZE(S)", "THEMED CHALLENGES", "SEEING YOUR LEADERBOARD RANK", and "SEEING YOUR TEAM'S LEADERBOARD RANK". The fourth question is "How familiar are you with CommuterCash?" with a text input field containing "Very Familiar - I've Used It Before". At the bottom, there are three icons: a calendar for "LOG TRIP", a car for "TRIP PLANNER", and a trophy for "REWARDS".A smartphone screen displaying the goDMV Commuter Competition microsurvey. The app header shows the "CommuterCash" logo. The survey title is "goDMV Commuter Competition". The first question is "What would motivate you most to log trips during the goDMV Commuter Competition?" with a "SELECT ALL THAT APPLY" button and six options: "BONUS POINTS IN COMMUTERCASH", "GRAND PRIZE", "SPONSORED RAFFLE PRIZE(S)", "THEMED CHALLENGES", "SEEING YOUR LEADERBOARD RANK", and "SEEING YOUR TEAM'S LEADERBOARD RANK". The second question is "How familiar are you with CommuterCash?" with a text input field containing "Very Familiar - I've Used It Before". The third question is "If you are part of an employer team, do you know your team leader/point of contact?" with a text input field containing "Yes". The fourth question is "Show your first name and last initial on the Commuter Leaderboard" with a checkbox. At the bottom, there is a large "SUBMIT" button and three icons: a calendar for "LOG TRIP", a car for "TRIP PLANNER", and a trophy for "REWARDS".

Discussion Poll

You can use your cell phone or computer to join.

Go to menti.com
enter the code: **5993 5312**

Or hold your camera up to the QR code and follow the link.

Responses are anonymous (unless you somehow identify yourself in your responses).



Next Steps

Next Steps

1. Subcommittee review and endorsement of Retention Rate Survey Report and TDM Analysis:
 - **January 2027:** Receive presentation and draft report
 - **March 2027:** Request for endorsement
2. Reconvene TDM Evaluation Work Group in Spring 2027 to continue discussions planning for the next evaluation cycle

Thank you!

Questions?

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