



COG/TPB TRAVEL SURVEYS

Upcoming Surveys in FY 2026

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National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Agenda Item 8

Background and Overview

- COG/TPB conducts multiple travel and transportation surveys on a recurring basis to support the MPO planning process.
- Key transportation surveys funded by the UPWP include:
 - **Household travel surveys** (e.g., Regional Travel Survey)
 - **Public input surveys** (e.g., Visualize 2045)
 - **Transit surveys** (e.g., Intercity Travel Survey)
- Other transportation surveys are not directly funded by UPWP but support COG/TPB planning activities include the **Regional Air Passenger Survey** (funded by regional airport partners), and the **State of the Commute Survey** (funded by the Commuter Connections Program).
- COG/TPB also provides technical support to regional stakeholders to conduct their own transportation surveys (such as the coordination of transit on-board surveys).



Types of MPO Surveys



Transit on-board
surveys



Workplace and
establishment surveys



Household
travel surveys



Commuter
surveys



Housing
surveys



Public opinion
and input surveys



Air passenger
surveys



How is Survey Data Used for MPO Planning

- **Survey data play a crucial role in MPO transportation planning** by providing empirical evidence about how people travel, what their needs are, and how transportation systems function and perform.
- **Household travel surveys, such as the Regional Travel Survey, provide a detailed and comprehensive picture of travel patterns** by gathering data such as trip purpose, mode choice, trip frequency, travel times and distance, and time of day of travel.
- **Survey data provide critical input for developing and calibrating regional travel demand models** to forecast future travel patterns and develop scenarios for potential infrastructure and policy changes.
- **Travel surveys may also function as public opinion surveys**, helping MPOs understand regional transportation priorities, identify underserved populations and barriers to access, and support Title VI and environmental justice (EJ) analysis.



MPO Survey State of the Practice



Household travel surveys remain the primary data source for assessing regional travel behavior, although they are increasingly incorporating modern data collection technologies such as smartphone apps, passive data, and GPS enabled tools.



There is an increasing shift towards **mixed-method survey designs** (e.g., web, smartphone app, phone, etc.) to enhance accessibility, boost response rates, and improve overall data quality.



MPOs are employing **creative use of survey incentives**, including targeted and differential incentives, to increase participation from hard-to-reach populations.



Innovative sampling approaches are being used to ensure maximum participation, reduce coverage bias, and expand the reach of surveys to underrepresented groups.



COG/TPB Surveys in FY 2026

- Regional Travel Survey (2025-2026)
- Washington-Baltimore Regional Air Passenger Survey (2025)
- State of the Commute Survey (2025)
- Coordination of Transit-On-Board Surveys (2025-2026)



Regional Travel Survey – Overview

TPB has conducted a regional household travel survey approximately every ten years since 1968.

The most recent Regional Travel Survey was conducted in 2017-2018 and included data from 16,000 households.

It collects demographic and travel information from a representative sample of households in the greater Washington, DC region (TPB modeled area).

It is the largest single discrete project (by cost) in the UPWP.

The data are used to inform regional growth and transportation planning issues.

It serves as the primary source of observed data for model estimation, validation, and calibration, both for the current trip-based model and the future activity-based model.



Regional Travel Survey – Methodology

- The 2025/2026 Regional Travel Survey will be the **first household travel survey** in the Washington, DC region conducted **in the post-pandemic era**.
- It will embrace the **latest survey methods and data collection technology**, such as using smartphone apps and utilizing passive data collection.
- Unlike the previous once-a-decade approach, the TPB will conduct the **Regional Travel Survey every three to five years starting in 2025/2026** to better capture temporal changes in travel behavior.
- The survey will include the **option to oversample and supplement the randomly selected, probability-based sample with a non-probability sample** to improve representation of hard-to-reach populations.
- The TPB plans to provide **flexibility for local jurisdictions within the TPB Planning Area** to acquire additional add-on samples through a rider contract.



Regional Travel Survey



Survey Region:
Transportation Planning Board
(TPB) Modeled Area



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Regional Activity Center Map
COG Round 10.0 Cooperative Forecast

Specific sampling targets
by jurisdiction/regional
activity centers

- 1. Monumental Core
- 2. Southwest Waterfront
- 3. Downtown DC
- 4. Downtown East DC
- 5. West End
- 6. Golden Triangle
- 7. U Street/Howard University
- 8. Adams Morgan/Dupont
- 9. Georgetown
- 10. Friendship Heights/Tenleytown
- 11. Former Walter Reed/Upper George Ave
- 12. Petworth/Parkview
- 13. Columbia Heights
- 14. North Capitol Crossroads
- 15. Convention Center/Shaw
- 16. NoMA
- 17. New York Ave NE
- 18. Brookland/Catholic University
- 19. Rhode Island Ave Metro
- 20. Takoma Metro
- 21. Minnesota Ave and Benning Road Metro
- 22. H Street
- 23. Capitol Hill
- 24. Capitol Riverfront
- 25. Stadium-Armory
- 26. Anacostia/Poplar Point/St. Elizabeths

- Montgomery County
- 27. Metropolitan Grove
- 28. Germantown
- 29. Clarkburg
- 30. Frederick Ave Corridor/Lakeforest Mall
- 31. Old Town Gaithersburg
- 32. Shady Grove
- 33. King Farm/Shady Grove Metro
- 34. Glenmont
- 35. Kensington
- 36. Wheaton
- 37. White Oak
- 38. Takoma/Langley Crossroads
- 39. Silver Spring
- 40. Bethesda
- 41. Medical Center/NIH
- 42. Glenview
- 43. North Bethesda
- 44. Teltrook and Rockville Pike
- 45. Tower Oaks
- 46. Rock Spring
- 47. Rockville Town Center
- 48. Montgomery College/Rockville
- 49. Fallsview and Research Boulevard
- 50. Life Sciences Center/Crown Farm
- 51. Kentlands

- Prince George's County
- 52. National Harbor
- 53. Oxon Hill
- 54. Branch Ave
- 55. Suitland
- 56. Naylor Rd Southern Ave
- 57. Greenbelt
- 58. WMU Purple Line
- 59. West Hyattsville Metro
- 60. Port Towns
- 61. Hyattsville Crossing
- 62. College Park Metro
- 63. New Carrollton
- 64. Landover Metro
- 65. Morgan Boulevard
- 66. Largo Town Center
- 67. Landover Gateway
- 68. Bowie
- 69. Laurel
- 70. Westphalia Town Center

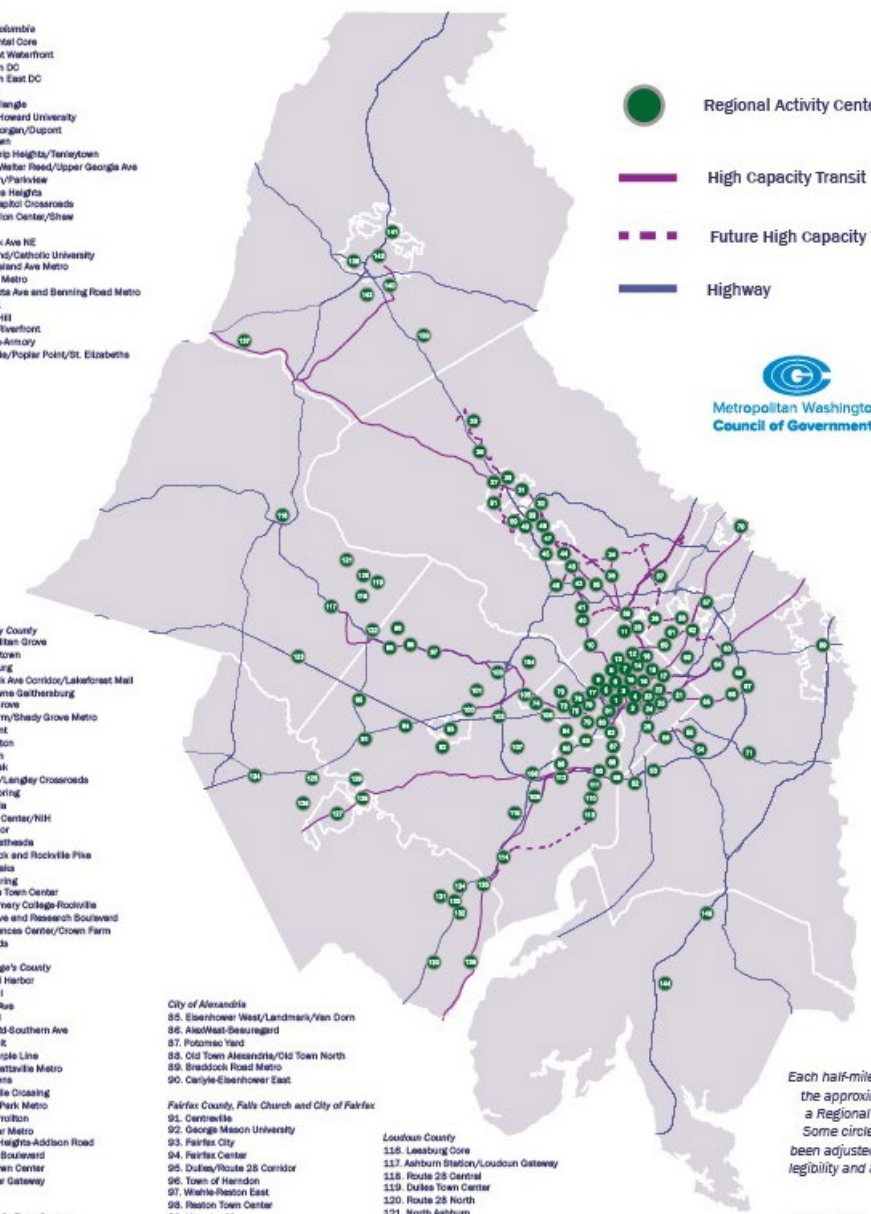
- Arlington County
- 71. Ballston
- 72. Ballston
- 73. Langston Boulevard
- 74. Washington Street/East Falls Church Metro
- 75. Virginia Square
- 76. Clarendon
- 77. Rosslyn
- 78. Court House
- 79. Columbia Pike
- 80. Pentagon City
- 81. Pentagon
- 82. Crystal City
- 83. Shirlington
- 84. Bailey's Crossroads-Western Gateway

- City of Alexandria
- 85. Eisenhower West/Landmark/Vin Don
- 86. Aik/West-Southeast
- 87. Potomac Yard
- 88. Old Town Alexandria/Old Town North
- 89. Braddock Road Metro
- 90. Carlyle-Eisenhower East

- Fairfax County, Falls Church and City of Fairfax
- 91. Centreville
- 92. George Mason University
- 93. Fairfax City
- 94. Fairfax Center
- 95. Dulles/Route 28 Corridor
- 96. Town of Herndon
- 97. Wiehle-Reston East
- 98. Reston Town Center
- 99. Herndon Metro
- 100. Vienna Metro
- 101. Town of Vienna
- 102. Manassas
- 103. Tysons
- 104. McLean
- 105. West Falls Church/West Broad Street
- 106. East End/Sewen Corners
- 107. Annandale
- 108. Beltsville South
- 109. Franconia-Springfield
- 110. Season-Groveton
- 111. Huntington-Penn Daw
- 112. Bush Hill/Van Don Street Metro
- 113. Hylle Valley-Gum Springs
- 114. Lorton
- 115. Fort Belvoir North

- Loudoun County
- 116. Leesburg Core
- 117. Ashburn Station/Loudoun Gateway
- 118. Route 28 Central
- 119. Dulles Town Center
- 120. Route 28 North
- 121. North Ashburn
- 122. Route 28 South
- 123. Arooke

- Prince William, Manassas and Manassas Park
- 124. Gainesville
- 125. Sudley
- 126. Innovation Park Town Center
- 127. Downtown Manassas
- 128. Manassas Park
- 129. Yorkshire
- 130. Fetter Park/Dumfries
- 131. Quartz District
- 132. Potomac Town Center
- 133. Potomac Mills
- 134. The Landing at Prince William
- 135. North Woodbridge Town Center
- 136. Potomac Shores



Each half-mile circle represents
the approximate location of
a Regional Activity Center.
Some circle locations have
been adjusted to increase map
legibility and avoid overlapping.

Multi-Jurisdiction RACs

- District of Columbia and Montgomery
- 10. Friendship Heights/Tenleytown
- 20. Takoma Metro

- Montgomery and Prince George's
- 38. Takoma/Langley Crossroads

- Arlington and Falls Church
- 74. Washington Street/East Falls Church Metro

- Arlington and Fairfax County
- 84. Bailey's Crossroads-Western Gateway

- Frederick County
- 137. Brunswick

- 138. The Golden Mile
- 139. Urbans

- 140. South Frederick
- 141. Northwest Frederick
- 142. Downtown Frederick
- 143. Ballenger Creek

- Charles County
- 144. La Plata
- 145. Waldorf

- Falls Church and Fairfax County
- 105. West Falls Church/West Broad Street
- 106. East End/Sewen Corners

Regional Travel Survey – Timeline

- The RFP was released on May 22, 2025, and is currently accepting proposals through June 22.
- The contract is expected to be awarded in late summer 2025.
- Data collection is scheduled to begin in fall 2025 and will continue into 2026.

Regional Air Passenger Survey – Overview

The TPB has conducted regional air passenger surveys at the three major commercial airports (BWI, DCA, IAD) since 1973-74, and every two years since 2005 (except in 2021 due to the pandemic).

The most recent Regional Air Passenger Survey was conducted in October 2023 and included data from 9,600 air passengers interviewed at the gates of the three airports.

The survey collects information about passenger trips to the airports and airport preferences from a representative sample of flights and air passengers.

It serves as the primary source of data for developing the Regional Air Passenger Survey General Findings, Geographic Findings, and Ground Access Forecast Updates.

The data are used by the regional airport authorities (MAA and MWAA) to inform airport planning and are essential for airport system planning processes.

The survey is not directly funded through the UPWP but is supported by MAA and MWAA.



Regional Airport Systems Planning



- The **Continuous Airport System Planning Program (CASP)** provides a regional process that supports planning, development and operation of airport and airport-serving transportation facilities in a systematic framework for the Washington region.
- The **TPB Aviation Technical Subcommittee (ATS)** develops, implements, and monitors CASP program activities and oversees integration of airport system planning with the regional transportation planning process.



Regional Air Passenger Survey - Timeline

- Upon receiving commitment letters from all airport partners, planning will start for the 2025 survey.
- Assuming the survey methodology remains consistent with the 2023 survey, a pretest is not anticipated.
- COG staff will begin badging procedures in summer 2025 and will coordinate with the consultant to develop the survey design and sampling plan.
- Survey data collection is targeted for October 2025, consistent with the previous survey cycle.



State of the Commute Survey – Overview

The TPB has conducted the State of the Commute Survey every three years through the Commuter Connections Program.

The survey focuses on employed persons and examines commuting travel to and from work in the greater Washington, DC region.

The most recent survey was conducted in 2022 and included data from nearly 8,400 commuters; the 2025 survey is currently underway.

The data are used to analyze commute trends and to evaluate transportation demand management (TDM) services administered by Commuter Connections.

The survey is not directly funded through the UPWP but is supported by the Commuter Connections Program.



State of the Commute Survey - Timeline

- Survey preparation through March 2025 (includes questionnaire, sample plan, postcard design, mailing preparation)
- Data collection in the field from April to June 2025
 - Wave 1 mailing in early April
 - Wave 2 mailing in early May (informed by response rates in Wave 1)
- Analysis and reporting from July-November 2025
 - Data cleaning and analysis from July-September
 - Present high-level findings to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee in September
 - Email draft report to Commuter Connections Subcommittee members and post online in late October
 - Finalize and publicly release report in November 2025



Coordination of Transit On-Board Surveys – Overview

The TPB is developing its next-generation, activity-based regional travel demand model (“Gen3 Model”) which relies on observed transit trip data—including origin and destination location and purpose, access and egress mode, and transit route sequence.

These transit data can be obtained through a regionally coordinated effort to conduct transit on-board surveys (TOBS) across the region’s public transit operators.

While the Regional Travel Survey collect similar information for all trips, transit trips comprise too small a percentage of total individual trips to sufficiently represent travel patterns of transit users.

Although transit operators often collect information for Title VI compliance, customer satisfaction, and subsidy allocation, these surveys often exclude data needed to calibrate travel models, such as origin and destination.



Coordination of Transit On-Board Surveys – Next Steps



In FY 2026, the TPB will play a key role in coordinating agency efforts **to collect and develop a consistent TOBS dataset** to support travel demand modeling and other data needs.



TPB staff will **provide technical support** and potentially additional resources to other transit operators in a partnership role.



TPB staff has engaged in **discussions with WMATA** and expressed a commitment to collaborate on this effort.



TPB staff plans to **reach out to and engage other transit operators individually**, as well as through the TPB Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee.



TPB staff also intends **to coordinate with the travel modeling community** via the TPB Travel Forecasting Subcommittee.



Summary and Next Steps

- COG/TPB conducts a range of recurring **transportation surveys to support the metropolitan planning process**; several key surveys will be conducted in FY 2026.
- While many surveys are funded by the UPWP (e.g., Regional Travel Survey), others such as the Regional Air Passenger Survey and the State of the Commute Survey are supported by external partners.
- Survey data such as those from the Regional Travel Survey, **provide critical input for model calibration, travel forecasting, equity analyses, and scenario planning**.
- COG/TPB surveys are **incorporating best practices in survey methodology**, including a shift towards mixed-method designs and innovative sampling and incentive strategies to improve response rates, data quality, and engagement with hard-to-reach populations.
- COG/TPB will continue collaborating with regional stakeholders to coordinate future surveys, particularly transit-on-board surveys.



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