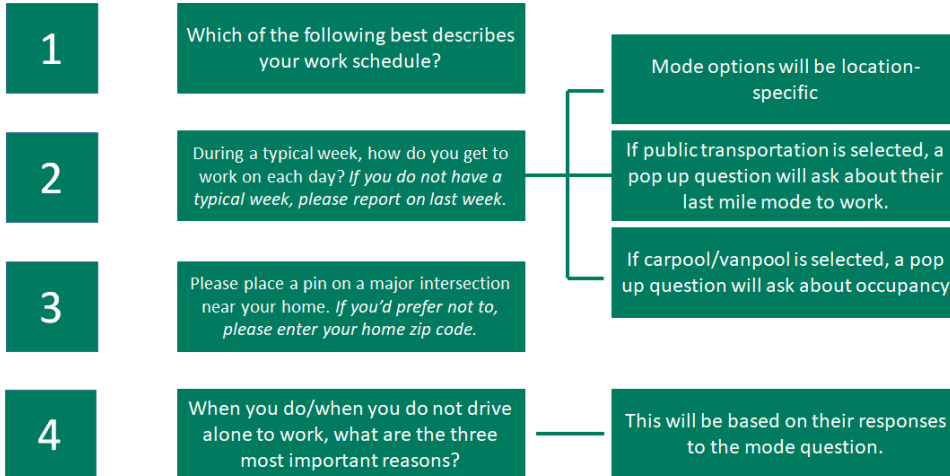# Commute Trip Reduction Survey

Proposed changes

Key points

- It is recommended that the new survey be shorter, consisting of only four questions, with built in skip logic and updated modes.

1	Which of the following best describes your work schedule?	Mode options will be location-specific
2	During a typical week, how do you get to work on each day? *If you do not have a typical week, please report on last week.*	If public transportation is selected, a pop up question will ask about their last mile mode to work.
		If carpool/vanpool is selected, a pop up question will ask about occupancy
3	Please place a pin on a major intersection near your home. *If you'd prefer not to, please enter your home zip code.*	
4	When you do/when you do not drive alone to work, what are the three most important reasons?	This will be based on their responses to the mode question.

- It is recommended that the new survey be almost exclusively online, mobile-device friendly, with translations built into the instrument.
- It is recommended that all reports be displayed in a dashboard or other visual format, with simple download of data and graphics.

Background

In March 2020, WSDOT conducted 32 interviews related to the Commute Trip Reduction survey and data products. Based on those interviews a set of [draft recommendations](#) for changes were developed and released for a month-long comment period[1]. Comments were received from the City of Bellevue, City of Kent, City of SeaTac, City of Seattle, Community Transit, Eastern Washington University, Greater Redmond TMA, Microsoft, Pierce County, and T-Mobile. The comments and draft recommendations were workshopped with a sprint team consisting of members of the TDM Technical Committee. The remainder of this document summarizes the revised draft recommendations.

Question changes

1. We recommend removing the first two questions from the survey[2]. The intention would be to ask employers, at a minimum, to survey their affected employees, if they are known. If an employer wishes to survey all their employees, they would be welcome to do so. The current survey questions do not accurately capture affected employees, as there is no question about length of employment. Furthermore, we have not seen a statistically significant difference

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[1] The interview summary and draft recommendations may be found at:
https://rpubs.com/wsdot_ptd/ctr_data_update_recommendations
[2] A copy of the current survey questions is available at: https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2019/09/09/PT-Form-CommuteTripReduction-EmployeeSurvey.pdf

between (potentially) affected/unaffected employees' NDATs and VMTs. Removing these questions would remove confusion, and few if any interviewees reported using the information from these questions. The survey is anonymous, so employers cannot use it to form carpools or vanpools. We suggest employers use their own HR data about people's home addresses and schedules.

2. We recommend making the home zip code question mandatory. We propose adding a feature that would allow survey respondents to use a map to "drop a pin" on a major intersection close to their house to provide a more precise home location. The benefit of the pin would be more precise commute distances and an educated guess at the corridors people use to get to work. Even with only the zip code, though, we would be able to calculate the distance from home to work from this information (with an error no larger than what comes from the current mileage estimates) and would then be able to remove question 3, which asks respondents for their estimate for traveled distance. We believe that this method would provide consistent calculations for distance. Home to work distances would be calculated by calculating the shortest network distance from the dropped pin or zip code centroid to the work address location through the Google API or a similar service. The point level data would also allow for granularity lost when some zip codes are large or a CTR-affected city has only a few zip codes.

3. We recommend customizing question four (which is about modes) to each respondent based on their geographic location. If they are in the central Puget Sound, they would be offered TNCs and shuttles as mode options; if they are in Yakima, they would not be offered ferries as an option. This question would also clarify compressed work weeks and teleworking, so it would not be necessary to ask about those activities separately. Further, people who choose public transportation would be asked how they got from the public transportation station to work (e.g., last mile mode), creating a better understanding of multimodal use and giving employers information to determine if CTR strategies could be applied to the last mile portion of the trips. Furthermore, other modes would be simplified and/or combined and we would remove overnight business trips.

4. We recommend removing question five about the number of people in carpools and vanpools and instead having a pop-up question about occupancy, only for the people who choose carpool or vanpool in the mode choice question.

5. We recommend removing question seven, and asking people to report on their typical week, rather than asking them if the week was typical. We know this will mean we will no longer capture anomalies in how people commute (e.g., I normally bus, but I took my car to run an errand after work), but the data is not accurate enough to require that level of detail. For people that do not have a typical week, there would be a separate instruction: "If you don't have a 'typical' commute schedule, please report on your commutes for last week." Finally, if someone is going to misrepresent how they commute, it does not matter if we ask for a specific week or a typical week: they can falsify either. We have no reasons to suspect this is an issue at worksites.

6. We recommend moving question eight about work schedule to the beginning of the survey so as to make clearer the difference between a day off and a compressed work week schedule. Again, the instructions would be clear about describing a typical week, so vacations and holidays should not be included.

7. We recommend removing the parking payment question and only collecting this information in the program report. We did not hear any interviewee comment that they used this information.

8. We recommend removing question ten on telework as a separate question and instead allow it to be a selectable mode in question four.
9. We recommend catering questions 11 and 12 based on the responses to question 4 about what commute modes the person used. For instance, if someone never drives, they would not be asked about why they drive. This would make the survey shorter and more relevant to each participant. We also want to make the options actionable in terms of TDM strategies that could address those concerns.
10. We will consider showing a result snapshot once a survey is complete to provide instant feedback.

Format changes

11. We recommend that the survey be shorter, with skip logic, as articulated in the proposed changes to questions.
12. We recommend that there would not be programmable supplemental questions. The survey should be concise and consistent. We will add a comment box at the end of the survey. If worksites want to collect more information, be it email address for prize drawings, interest in carpool matching, or the collection of supplemental information, they can instruct their employees to use the comment box to enter the information. Comments will be able to be downloaded by the jurisdictions.
13. We recommend that the survey be anonymous and not require an employee's email to participate. Very few other surveys require this, and it creates considerable worry for many employers. And, if the email addresses are desired—e.g., for a prize drawing—the email addresses could be entered into the comment box at the end.
14. We will provide more guidance for alternative data collection format and requirements and ensure visibility of that guidance.
15. We will encourage everyone to survey as frequently as they choose (at least once every two years, as is the current process). The purpose for surveying more often would be for a site to use recently collected CTR data to inform and institute new CTR strategies, and then survey the workforce shortly after the implementation to see if those CTR strategies are having an effect. Currently, with two years between each survey, changes in the data could be caused by many factors, such as a different employee populations or externalities (e.g., gas price fluctuations).
16. ScanTron bubble sheet surveys will no longer be compatible with the new system. The new survey will be mobile-device friendly and available in multiple languages. A PDF file of the survey will be provided and could be printed for those requiring paper surveys, but the information would need to be entered by the sites administering the surveys in an electronic format. We will create an upload function for CSV files to be used by sites who print and utilize paper surveys.
17. We recommend that some sites be exempt from surveying (but not the program – they would still be required to have CTR plans), such as recalcitrant sites with low return on investment or sites that have exemplary CTR programs. For the latter, they could potentially provide a simple report on mode split, if desired. These decision would be at the discretion of grantees.
18. We recommend removing response rate requirements. Sites with excellent response rates would have statistically valid samples. Sites without robust responses would have to rely on the information that they gather, but without the burden of attempting a second survey to improve responses rates. We will build a functionality into the reporting that shows whether the sample

was statistically significant for a specified confidence level and interval, based on the amount of responses necessary to achieve a representative sample for a site's population. Jurisdictions would also be free to mandate their own response rate requirements.

Product changes

19. We recommend eliminating the PDF worksite reports and replacing them with interactive dashboards. The aggregate report would also be in a dashboard format (and renamed the "CTR Program Report"). Data could easily be downloaded as a CSV file for anyone who wishes to still interact with the data directly. Advanced users would have additional methods for interacting with the data. We received many comments about additional features and will consider what we are able to build within the project scope.
20. For each site, we recommend developing 1) information on peer comparison (where applicable) by proximity and industry type, 2) TDM suggestions based on the sites' locations and amenities available to them, and 3) origin-destination heat maps based on their employees home locations (these will be summarized at the zip code level).
21. Raw data and results would be available automatically when survey periods close. We will continue to produce a CTR Program Report.
22. We will provide more trainings and more robust informational documents (e.g., FAQs, policies, guidance).