



# Want \$50? Planning agency will pay to hear about your commute

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 Chicago's regional planning agency wants to know how you roll, and is willing to pay for the information.

Between now and May 2019, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning will be conducting the "My Daily Travel" survey, asking 12,000 households around northeastern Illinois about their travel habits to measure and understand people's changing behaviors. The goal is to find out how residents use the roads, trains, bike paths and other ways of getting around on a daily basis.

## ADVERTISING

Households that complete the survey between now and May will receive \$50. To sign up for the survey, visit [www.cmap.illinois.gov/data/transportation/travel-survey](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/data/transportation/travel-survey).

"By sharing their daily travel information, survey participants will help CMAP build an accurate picture of local and regional transportation needs," said CMAP Executive Director Joseph Szabo in a statement. "CMAP will use this data to better understand how Chicago-area residents get from place to place — whether by car, bus, train, bike, or on foot — and plan for regional transportation investments."

The last CMAP household travel survey was conducted in 2007-2008, back before Uber and Lyft, the widespread use of smartphones and apps like Waze, and big shifts in the area's population. It's important for CMAP to get new information, since the agency sets the agenda for transportation funding for the region and determines which projects are eligible for federal funding, CMAP officials said.

The agency is finalizing its "Go to 2050" plan, which will be released Oct. 10 and include recommendations for road and transit projects.

Ten years ago, an important change the CMAP survey discovered was the concept of "peak spreading," meaning that more people were leaving for work well before or after the rush hour to avoid traffic congestion, and leaving work earlier or later than rush hour for the same reason, said Craig Heither, principal analyst at CMAP.

"We were also seeing an increase in the number of people driving alone to work," said Heither.

He said CMAP will be interested to see how ride-sharing services like Uber and Divvy bike-sharing are being used for commutes and leisure travel.

"We also want to see if telecommuting is in wider-spread use than it was 10 years ago," Heither said. "How are people finding ways to avoid those dreadful commutes?"

Heither said CMAP is budgeting \$2.7 million for the survey, which will include the amount paid to participants. It is funded through federal transportation dollars. Households are paid out of respect for their time, Heither said.

"It asks for a lot of details. ... We want to offer them a small incentive," he said.

Heither said that when it comes to surveying households about their travel habits, research shows it is more cost-effective to offer people a small incentive to complete the survey than it is to spend time and money chasing people to get them to take it.

The survey comes in two parts. The first part asks for basic information, like address, number of people in the household, number and type of cars, race, income level, education levels and how household members get to work or school. This part of the survey takes about 15 minutes to complete.

The survey taker is then assigned a date about a week or so in the future. On that day, members of the household must detail their travel, such as when they went to work and how, and whether they also went to the store or a soccer game. Heither said that the survey won't ask for the exact streets a person took while driving or walking, but will ask about what transit stops were used.

"It's more about where you started your trip, where you ended your trip and what activity were you doing, such as whether you were going to the store," he said. The second part of the survey, which can be completed by mail or by using a smartphone app, takes about 25 minutes, Heither said.

"We're trying to get a complete picture of someone's travel day," Heither explained. "We want to understand the current travel patterns in the region and the factors that effect people's travel decisions."

CMAP wants to get as broad a representation of residents as possible, and so is spreading word about the survey through the news media, social media, partner agencies and school districts, Heither said. As CMAP starts to get back results, it can decide if it is getting a good enough response from different parts of the region.

"If there seem to be areas where we're falling short, we'll try different ways to approach them," said Heither. He said once data are collected, CMAP will look at different demographic measures and weight the surveys so that groups are adequately represented.

The survey officially launched Aug. 24, and so far 260 households have completed the first step. Heither said all the data will be available by the end of next year.

## Transportation song quiz

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Last week's road song was a maritime number by someone born to rock the boat. That someone is notably *not* in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and should be. The song is "Mutineer" by Warren Zevon. Peter Lusk, of Arlington Heights, was first with the right answer.

This week's song talks about a ship, but is really about an aircraft. The singer who made this number famous went on to become U.S. ambassador to Ghana. What's the song, and who sang it? The winner gets a Tribune notebook, and glory.

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