

# **Puget Sound Regional Council**

1999

## **Puget Sound Household Travel Survey**

*Final Report*

(December 1999)

# Executive Summary



NuStats Research and Consulting conducted the 1999 Puget Sound Household Travel Survey on behalf of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The purpose of the study was to provide data for the continuing development and refinement of the Regional Travel Demand Forecasting Model, as well as to provide a better understanding of travel behavior in the Puget Sound region. The study area consists of King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties. The resultant data set will be used to fulfill the model's functions of estimating trip generation and distribution, mode choice, and assignments. The study consisted of households keeping track of travel for a 48-hour period. And for those household members sixteen years of age or older, an "attitude" survey about transportation and land use issues was also administered.

A pilot test was conducted during early June to test the survey procedures and materials. Respondents and data collection staff provided valuable feedback about the survey process and materials. All changes to the process and materials were changed prior to the full implementation of the study.

A four-phase data collection procedure was used: 1) advance calls, 2) recruitment, 3) reminder calls, 4) data retrieval. The entire data collection process was conducted between July and early November 1999. A total of 9,985 households agreed to receive a letter and a brochure about the survey; 9,028 households were recruited to participate and 6,000 households completed 48-hour place-based diaries. A completion rate of 66.5%, which is the percentage of completes to recruited households, was achieved (each person in the household had to provide trip information in order for the household to be considered a complete).

A few of the key findings include the following:

- The average household size in the entire study area is 2.4 persons.
- The average vehicle ownership is 1.9 for the four-county study area.
- 4.9 percent of all households in the survey do not own a vehicle; another 64.6% own two or more.
- The median household income for 1999 is \$49,246, with 56% of all households earning \$45,000 or more.
- 60% of survey participants have lived in the four-county study area for longer than five years.
- The average daily person trip rate for the entire region is 7.2, and per household it is 16.1.
- Slightly more than three in four (76%) respondents live in a single family home; another 12% live in an apartment.
- Females tend to make slightly more average daily trips (3.7 each) than males (3.5 each).
- One in four respondents is 55 years of age or older.
- Persons between the ages of 35 and 54 generate a two-day average of 8.3 trips each; this is significantly more than the two-day average of 7.2 trips per person overall.
- Among those 16 years of age or older, 38.3% work full-time only while 17.7% attend school full time only. Another 16.4% of the respondents are retired.
- Among those employed, 43.4% report being in a white-collar professional or managerial position or business owner. Another one in four report being in a white-collar sales, clerical or technical position.
- Virtually all (99%) of employed respondents work outside of their home at least one day each

week. Nearly eight in ten (79%) commute by car only, while 3% reported getting to work via car/bus combination. Six percent reported commuting by bus.

- Other than to go home, work (11.5%), incidental shopping (11.3%), and social/recreational (9.2%) purposes are most frequently reported trip purposes.
- Major shopping (25.6), medical (21.8), and work (20.3) trips have the longest reported commute time in minutes.

From the personal "attitude" survey:

- About one-third of respondents (29%) has a desktop computer at home.
- One-fourth (25%) of respondents has Internet access.
- Over one-third (36%) of the respondents estimate that it costs between \$1,000 and \$3,000 per year to maintain their vehicle(s).
- Eight in ten respondents reported they would take an alternate route to where they are going if they knew ahead of time that they would be caught in traffic.
- Respondents are somewhat pessimistic about transportation issues. They disagree that transportation investments adequately address the issues of where people live, work or shop and that the quality of life is getting better. They also disagree that they are able to travel their regular route more quickly compared to 12 months ago. They agree that traffic congestion is as bad as everyone says it is.
- Respondents agree that reducing traffic congestion should be the primary goal of transportation plans.
- In relieving traffic congestion, respondents disagree that building more roads will solve the problem.