

# Transportation habits surveyed in Anchorage, Mat-Su Borough

By DEVIN KELLY  
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A pair of surveys being conducted this month are designed to give Anchorage transportation planners a better picture of how commuters get from point A to point B.

One, called the Regional Household Travel Survey, began Monday and asks randomly-selected households to offer an in-depth window into travel habits. It's the first time the federally funded survey has been conducted since 2002.

The survey is jointly sponsored by the Municipality of Anchorage and the Alaska Department of Transportation. Surveyors sent postcard invitations to households in Anchorage, Chugiak-Eagle River and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough with instructions to record "travel diaries" and

report findings either online or over the phone.

"This is an opportunity for people to let us know where they go," said Craig Lyon, Anchorage's transportation planning manager, adding that the survey results will guide current planning for future transportation projects.

The surveys are timed with the release of updated census data, which is why the last one was more than a decade ago, Lyon said. This year will mark the first time that communities in the Mat-Su will be included in the survey, a reflection of the region's fast population growth.

Lyon also pointed out that a lot of new roads have been built and projects completed since the last survey in 2002 — such as Elmore Road, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, and improvements between Lake Otis Parkway and Tudor Road.

On top of that, more people are biking year-round, Lyon said. He said the new data is expected to improve modeling and inform projects that are years in the making.

Lyon said surveyors are hoping for a 3 percent return rate on the surveys. Participants earn a \$10 gift card to Amazon or Walmart.

"The bigger the return rate, the more confident you can feel about the results," he said.

More information on the survey can be found at [regionltravelsurvey.com](http://regionltravelsurvey.com).

Separately, starting Wednesday, riders on Anchorage's People Mover bus system may see surveyors with tablets aboard buses. The surveyors will be asking riders questions, such as why and how often the rider boards the bus, and loading answers directly onto their tablets.

The goal is to get a picture of travel habits, as well as ask questions about bus service, said Lance Wilber, Anchorage transportation director.

Wilber said he expects surveyors to wrap up in about two weeks. He said this is the first bus survey in about six years. . . .