



NASHVILLE AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Middle Tennessee Transportation and Health Study

www.MiddleTNStudy.org

About the Study

Transportation helps shape an area's economy, health and quality of life. Not only does the transportation system provide for the mobility of people and goods, it also influences patterns of growth and economic activity by providing access to land. The performance of the system affects public policy concerns like air quality, environmental resource consumption, social equity, land use, urban growth, economic development, safety, and security. Transportation planning recognizes the critical links between transportation and other societal goals such as improving public health. The planning process is more than merely listing highway and transit capital projects. It requires developing strategies for operating, managing, maintaining, and financing the area's transportation system in such a way as to advance the area's long-term goals.

The Middle Tennessee Transportation and Health Study will serve as the primary source of data that will be used by local transportation planners to identify existing and future deficiencies in the transportation system to ensure gas taxes are used in a way that adequately meet the demands of the traveling public. The study is designed and administered based on the [National Household Travel Survey](#) conducted periodically by the U.S. Department of Transportation to help ensure federal programs are keeping up with public demand.

While the Middle Tennessee area is home to more than 1.5 million residents, this study will be conducted with only approximately 6,000 households. To ensure that we include participants who fairly represent the region's population, each household will be asked a series of detailed questions about their socioeconomic and travel characteristics, and about their access to transportation. When the survey is completed, the data will be used to estimate how much travel is generated by all households within the region.

Emphasis on Health

In addition to questions about travel, all households participating in the survey will be asked to answer a few general questions about their health and physical activity. Data collected include the body mass index (BMI) of household members, and overall assessments of health, diet, physical activity and time spent sitting. This information will provide insight to the relationship between travel behavior, the health of residents within the region, and the built environment.

A small subset of households (600 households) will be selected to provide more in-depth information about travel and physical activity across a four-day period; these households will receive GPS devices and an activity monitor (accelerometer) to assist in the collection of these additional details. Participants will answer questions about their food security

environment (availability of fresh and affordable healthy foods in their neighborhoods); questions about physical activity as part of transportation trips and as part of leisure; as well as questions about the presence of chronic disease in the household such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

The data collected by the Middle Tennessee Transportation and Health Survey will enable the MPO to look at relationships between transportation, housing, commutes to work, walking and bicycling and the health of household members. The data will be used to inform the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and will help to shape transportation policies, funding and projects that will help to enhance the opportunity for active transportation in the Middle Tennessee region. The goal is to increase access to facilities that promote physical activity as part of transportation in order to improve public and environmental health.