



# TOP Survey Interest Form

As we approach data collection we would like to get a sense of how many states are interested in purchasing additional samples. This will allow us to plan and setup contracts and meetings. Please complete and return the attached form to Connie Yew ([Connie.Yew@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Connie.Yew@fhwa.dot.gov)) by **April 30, 2004**. While a full commitment need not be made until June 30, 2004, having an early indication of your interest will greatly facilitate planning.

| CONTACT INFORMATION  |                        |   |
|--|------------------------|---|
| State  |                        |   |
|  | <b>Primary Contact</b> | <b>Secondary Contact</b>                        |
| Name   |                        |   |
| Organization   |                        |   |
| Telephone  |                        |   |
| Email  |                        |   |
| INTEREST STATEMENT   |                        |   |
| <b>Level of Interest</b>   | <b>Check (X)</b>       | <b>Comments</b>                                 |
| Will Participate   |                        |   |
| Very Interested  |                        |   |
| Somewhat Interested  |                        |   |
| Will Not Participate   |                        |   |
| YOUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF RESEACH                                     |                        |   |
| <b>Objective</b>   | <b>Check (X)</b>       | <b>Comments</b>                                 |
| National Benchmarking  |                        |   |
| Regional Benchmarking  |                        |   |
| Internal Performance Measurement                                       |                        |   |
| Other  |                        |   |
| RESEACH HISTORY  |                        |   |
| Is or has your state conducted similar research? Please explain below. |                        |   |
|  |                        |   |
| POTENTIAL SAMPLE STRATIFICATION  |                        |   |
| <b>Scenario</b>  | <b>Check (X)</b>       | <b>Comment on anticipated number of Samples</b> |
| Statewide only   |                        |   |
| Region / District  |                        |   |
| Urban / Rural  |                        |   |
| Other  |                        |   |



# FHWA Traveler Opinion & Perception (TOP) Survey

Web Meeting Update  
April 20, 2004



[WWW.NWRG.COM](http://WWW.NWRG.COM)

## Web Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
  - Instructions on Web Meeting Process
- Update
  - Project Overview
  - E-Scan
  - Focus Groups
- Draft Survey
  - Key Topic Areas
  - Next Steps
- Q&A



**Project Overview**



[WWW.NWRG.COM](http://WWW.NWRG.COM)

## Final Statement of Objectives

- Design and implement a research program that provides a reliable measure of travelers' awareness, use, and perceptions of the nation's highway / roadway system
- Develop a comprehensive list of existing and emerging transportation system performance attributes
- Define how travelers define these transportation system performance attributes
- Develop a quantitative measurement program to measure and track traveler satisfaction with transportation system performance attributes
- Obtain baseline measures of perceptions of existing and potential transportation programs/ services

## Final Statement of Objectives

- Develop “easy to understand” indices of travelers’ opinions and perceptions at the National level
- Synthesize, interpret, and translate results into a set of Strategic Imperatives
  - Concrete strategies for improvement that federal and state highway agencies could take to improve the public’s satisfaction with the transportation system
- Prepare reports and make presentations on travelers’ opinions and perceptions at National and State levels

Page 5

## Overall Approach / Process

- Four phases
  - Develop statement of objectives
  - Exploratory research
    - E-Scan
    - Focus Groups
  - Conduct quantitative surveys
    - National Survey
    - State Survey Add-ons
  - Analysis & reports
    - National Survey
    - State Survey Add-ons

Page 6



The slide features a dark blue background with a geometric, low-poly pattern in shades of blue and white. In the top right corner, there is a logo for Northwest Research Group, consisting of a stylized yellow and white graphic above the text "NORTHWEST RESEARCH GROUP". Below the logo, there is a vertical stack of four small, square images: the top one shows a close-up of a human eye, the second shows a hand holding a pen over a document, the third shows a close-up of a diamond ring, and the bottom one shows a close-up of a smiling mouth. At the bottom right of the slide, the website address "WWW.NWRG.COM" is displayed in white text.

# E-Scan

A Survey of Surveys

WWW.NWRG.COM

## Objectives

- Review existing national, state, regional, and local surveys of the public regarding their experiences with the transportation system
- Summarize findings to gain some understanding of the context of public perceptions towards transportation
- Identify experiences / nuances to help design / validate TOP Survey
- Identify implications of research for FHWA and its program offices

## Process

- Initial scan of public information via web or other electronic means
  - Follow-up telephone interviews to gather additional information on identified studies where electronic search results are incomplete
  - Additional telephone calls placed to state DOTs to identify whether or not relevant research exists at the state or regional level
- Selected studies documented in case study profiles
  - Implications for TOP survey identified
- Results will be disseminated through final report and electronic database

Page 9

## Key Results

- 26 states are doing or have recently (within 5 years) completed some type of research related to customer satisfaction / performance measurement
- Research topics include:
  - Satisfaction with transportation products / services
  - Mobility / ability to get around
  - Customer service
  - Visioning / scoping

Page 10

## Key Results

- Research Populations:
  - General population
  - Roadway users
  - Commercial drivers
  - Elderly
- Methods include:
  - Telephone
  - Mail
  - Internet (not all scientific)
  - Multi-mode
  - Public & stakeholder workshops
  - In-vehicle

Page 11

## Implications for TOP Survey

- Widespread use of relevant research by states provides an opportunity to evaluate:
  - Questionnaire structure / wording of transportation system attributes
    - Understand how to focus respondent's attention on specific types of services
    - Understand how to describe services in a way respondents understand
    - Identify if specific questions produce valuable results
  - The use of scales
    - 4 point versus 5, 7, or 10 point scales
    - Type, e.g., Importance, Satisfaction, Frequency, Agreement, etc.

Page 12

## Implications for TOP Survey

- Analytical Methods
  - Composite scores / grading
  - Segmentation
- How best to consult states during the state add-on
  - Understand the use of such research by states or MPOs
  - Understand the uniqueness of individual states / regions of the country
- Will ensure that methods used in the TOP Survey will be of the highest standards and quality
  - Administration methodology
  - Questionnaire design
  - Sampling Technique
  - Analysis & interpretation

Page 13



The slide features a dark blue background with a complex, low-poly geometric pattern in shades of blue and white. In the top right corner, there is a logo for Northwest Research Group, consisting of a stylized yellow and white graphic above the text "NORTHWEST RESEARCH GROUP". The main text "Focus Groups" is displayed in a large, bold, white sans-serif font in the center-left. On the right side, there is a vertical stack of four small, square, grayscale images: the top one shows a close-up of a human eye, the second shows a hand holding a pen, the third shows a close-up of a hand holding a small object, and the bottom one shows a close-up of a smiling mouth. At the bottom right, the website address "WWW.NWRG.COM" is written in a small, white, sans-serif font.

**Focus Groups**

**NORTHWEST  
RESEARCH GROUP**

[WWW.NWRG.COM](http://WWW.NWRG.COM)



## Objectives

- Obtain an in-depth understanding of how travelers think and talk about the nation's highway system
  - Aids in developing specific and meaningful measurement questions, while ensuring that no potentially important area of questioning is overlooked in the subsequent quantitative research
  - Ensures that we learn to talk about features, attributes, and benefits using the voice of the public
  - Questionnaire will be written using terms and phrases that are understandable to the general public

Page 15

## Methodology

- Ten focus groups held in five cities representing different areas of the country and potentially different travel patterns / characteristics

| City            | Region           | Characteristics  |
|-----------------|------------------|--|
| Boise, ID       | West             | Small, urban market; some rural residents<br>Low congestion<br>High growth<br>Changing travel patterns   |
| Boston, MA      | East             | Large urban<br>Major commute market, high use of alternative modes<br>Strong, but aging, existing transportation infrastructure                |
| Dallas, TX      | South            | Large urban<br>Significant growth and urban / suburban sprawl<br>Fast growing / changing transportation system<br>Some use of new technologies |
| Minneapolis, MN | Midwest          | Mid-size urban<br>Moderate congestion<br>Well-established transportation system<br>Relatively innovative in use of transportation technologies |
| Phoenix, AZ     | West / Southwest | Large urban<br>High population of older drivers<br>Significant growth and urban / suburban sprawl  |

Page 16

## Group Composition

- Two groups in each market segmented by age
  - Younger – 18 to 44
  - Older – 45 and older
  - Younger Phoenix – 55 to 69
  - Older Phoenix – 70 and older
- Travel patterns
  - Had to travel at least occasionally as a driver or passenger in car or other vehicle
  - Had to have taken a trip of 30 miles or more by car or other vehicle in past six months
  - Mix of commuters and non-commuters
  - Some use of alternative modes (public transportation, bicycle, walk)
- Mix of demographics
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity / race

Page 17

## Key Findings – General Travel

- All travelers had extensive experience traveling on their local and, to some extent, their regional transportation system
  - Local, regional, long-distance travel
  - Some experience with alternative modes
  - Use of different roadways
  - Different driving conditions

Page 18

## Key Findings – Issues When Traveling

- Relative to other issues, transportation (with the exception of congestion) not a highly salient issue
  - People don't think about the system unless it doesn't work
  - Upset when it doesn't!!!
- Participants generally satisfied with their ability to get around
- Key Issues -- Nationwide
  - Peak hour congestion
  - Persistent and long-term construction
  - Road smoothness, potholes
  - Lack of planning

Page 19

## Key Findings – Priorities for Improvement

- Participants were able to clearly identify where improvements should be made
  - Reduce congestion
  - Provide alternate routes
  - Improve public transportation services
  - Better management of road construction / work zones
  - Better / more long-range planning
  - Better coordination of / planning for transportation and land use

Page 20

## Key Findings – General Issues

- Aware of influence of population and economic growth on traffic volumes and congestion
  - Split views on solution – more roads versus greater role for public transportation
- Many expressed concerns about impact of growth. Solutions proposed include:
  - More planning
  - Greater coordination between governments
  - Having developers pay for infrastructure

Page 21

## Key Findings – Critical Attributes

- Participants surprisingly aware of different programs / services
  - Boise mentioned use of pavement treatment to reduce black ice
  - Phoenix mentioned use of rubber surfacing material to reduce road noise
- Provided a reasonably consistent list of attributes across all markets
  - Differences by market primarily reflected differences in weather conditions
  - Some differences based on extent to which people traveled outside their area – greater familiarity

Page 22

## Key Findings – Critical Attributes

- Participants able to generate comprehensive list of attributes for primary categories of service
  - Highway safety
  - Roadway maintenance
  - Construction / work zone management
- Will require careful questionnaire wording / prompting to measure less obvious / highly salient attributes
  - Specific technologies / programs
  - Environmental impacts / issues
  - System coordination

Page 23

## Key Findings – Awareness of Agency Roles

- Most participants aware of multiple governments involved in transportation planning and implementation
  - Less able to articulate specific roles
- Generally aware of the role of State DOTs
  - Although awareness varied by region
- Lower awareness of FHWA and its role
  - Generally aware that controls funds
  - Some mentioned Research & Development

Page 24

## Key Findings – Public Participation

- Low involvement issue, except
  - When in their backyard
- Participants were aware of and recognized need for public participation
  - But few had participated
  - Not unique to transportation
- Mixed views as to the extent to which input is considered / used

Page 25



**Questionnaire Topics**

**NORTHWEST RESEARCH GROUP**

[WWW.NWRG.COM](http://WWW.NWRG.COM)

The slide features a dark blue background with a geometric, low-poly pattern in shades of blue and white. In the top right corner, there is a logo for Northwest Research Group, consisting of a stylized yellow and white arrow pointing down and to the right, above the text "NORTHWEST RESEARCH GROUP". Below the logo, there is a vertical stack of four small, square images showing close-ups of human eyes and a smiling mouth. At the bottom right, the website address "WWW.NWRG.COM" is displayed in white text.

## Sampling

- 2,500 completed surveys
  - All by telephone
- Stratification plan
  - By region
  - By state (minimum 25 per state)
- Strategies to boost response rates
  - Advance letter
  - Incentive – small \$\$
  - Strict calling procedures

Page 27

## Screening

- 18 years of age or older
  - Randomly selected household member using last birthday method
- Language for interview
  - Interviews will be conducted in English & Spanish
- Zip Code of residence
  - Used for sample stratification (region and state)
  - Will not be included with final data set
- Gender
  - Quick monitoring of distribution / sample representation

Page 28

## General Travel Characteristics

### ● Objectives

- Obtain a general overview of travel characteristics
  - Commute travel
  - Leisure, local / regional travel
  - Long distance car travel
- Will be used for market segmentation

### ● Source of Questions

- NHTS and BTS assorted surveys
  - Allows for comparability / consistency with other data sources
- General review of other surveys

Page 29

## Benefits of Good Transportation System

### ● Objective

- Measure travelers' perceptions of the benefits / contributions of an effective transportation to a community

### ● Source of Questions

- Adapted from Transportation Research Board Study – Image of Public Transit

### ● Issues

- Is this a comprehensive list of benefits?
- What scale – length & anchors – should we use?

Page 30



## Problems with Travel / Transportation

- Objectives
  - Provide baseline national measures of issues / problems
  - Identify specific regional issues / problems
- Source of Questions
  - BTS Omnibus Survey
  - NHTS Travel Survey
- Issues
  - Is this a comprehensive list of problems?
  - What scale – length & anchors – should we use?

Page 31

## Attributes to Rate

- Objective
  - Provide national measures of travelers' satisfaction with transportation system – the primary objective of this research
- Source of Attributes
  - Past FHWA surveys (*italicized in questionnaire*)
  - Focus Groups
  - Scan of Other Survey
- Issues
  - Is the list all-inclusive of the critical attributes?
  - Is the wording of the attributes clear? Will we know what respondents are rating?
  - What do we need to measure?

Page 32

## Other Topics / Issues

- Overall satisfaction
  - Can be used as a dependent variable in regression or other model to identify attribute importance / key issues
- Roles of Agencies
- Public Participation

Page 33

## Demographic Characteristics

- Objectives
  - Used for market segmentation and analysis
  - Used to assess representativeness of sample (notably age and gender distribution)
    - Post-stratification weighting will be applied as necessary
- Source of Questions
  - Use standard demographics (census, BTS) to ensure comparability of data
- Issues
  - Do we have what we need for market segmentation / analysis?

Page 34

## Next Steps

- Questionnaire development
  - Finalized by mid-May 2004
- Pretest
  - 100 pretest interviews
  - Conducted in June 2004
- Questionnaire revision / approval
  - Final questionnaire by mid-July 2004
  - OMB approval by August 2004
- Data Collection
  - Scheduled for September through November 2004

Page 35



**State Participation**



[WWW.NWRG.COM](http://WWW.NWRG.COM)

## Design of State Studies

### ● Base Sample

- A minimum of 400 households
- Drawn from a random sample of all telephone (both listed and unlisted) households in state
- States may purchase additional samples (n = 100 increments)

### ● Core Questionnaire

- 20 minute survey – must use core FHWA questions
  - Includes 10 customized questions of your choice / design
  - Include one open-ended question of your choosing

Page 37

## Deliverables

### ● Comprehensive Data Analysis

- One complete set of banner tabulations allowing you to break down results by key segments of choosing – e.g., geographic area, demographics, socioeconomics, travel characteristics

### ● Final Deliverables

- Final Report that includes . . .
  - Overview of project, objectives, and methodology
  - Analysis and interpretation of key research results
  - Comparison to national totals – no state-to-state comparisons
  - Conclusions and recommendations
- In-Person Presentation

Page 38

## Cost

- **Base Cost**
  - \$30,000
    - State match will be waived if using Statewide Planning and Research (SP&R) and Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds
    - Base cost does not include costs of travel. Travel expenses are billed at actual cost.
- **Additional Samples**
  - \$3,000 for each additional 100 respondents
- **Additional Services**
  - NWRG will prepare a firm fixed-price bid to cover other services required and/or to address an expanded scope of work (e.g., longer survey length, additional analysis, special reporting, etc.)

Page 39

## Key Dates

- **Indication of Preliminary Interest**
  - April 30, 2004
- **Commitment for Fall Data Collection**
  - June 30, 2004

Page 40



**NORTHWEST**  
RESEARCH GROUP

## Q&A



[WWW.NWRG.COM](http://WWW.NWRG.COM)

## Contacts

### Federal Highway Administration

<http://knowledge.fhwa.dot.gov/cops/pm.nsf/home>

Connie Yew

FHWA, Office of Corporate Management

(202) 366-1078

[Connie.Yew@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Connie.Yew@fhwa.dot.gov)

### Northwest Research Group, Inc.

<http://www.nwrq.com>

225 North 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200

Boise, ID 83702

phone (208)364-0171

fax (208)364-0181

**Rebecca Elmore-Yalch**

President / CEO

[byalch@nwrq.com](mailto:byalch@nwrq.com)

**Michael Skipper**

Project Director

[mskipper@nwrq.com](mailto:mskipper@nwrq.com)