

## Plans for the Future of the National Household Travel Survey

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Using NHTS Data for Transportation Decision Making:  
A Workshop  
June 6, 2011 Washington DC

# To Survey or Not?

- “a key attribute of a democracy is an informed citizenry” Robert Groves, Director of Census Bureau

# WHY? CONTINUE TO SET STANDARDS

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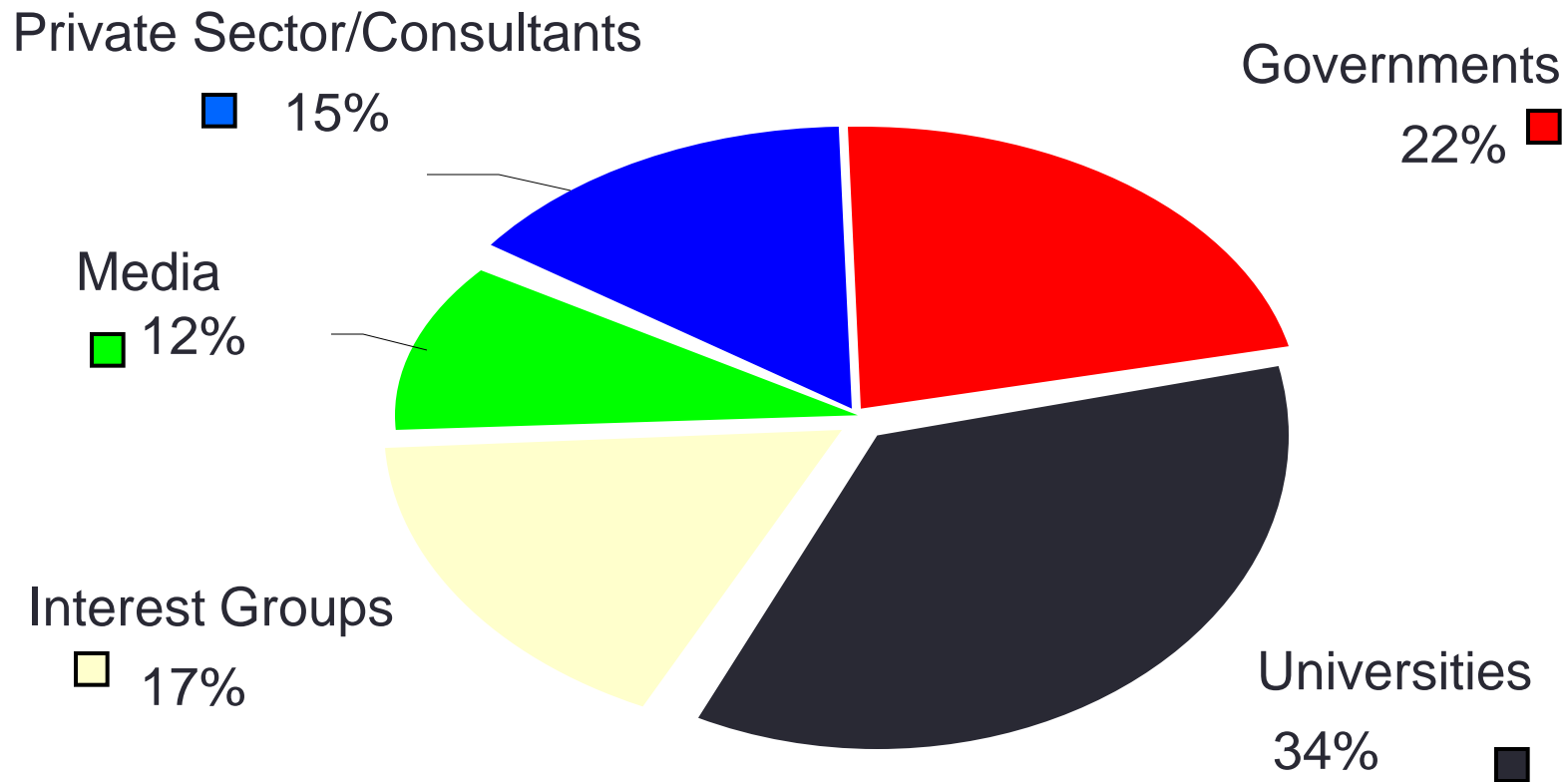
## **Surveys:**

- **Resource of Objectivity**
- **Produce Evidence**
- **Being Responsive**

# Program Goals

- Institutionalize the Study
- Maintain Add-On Program
- Serve the User Community
- Annualize Reports
- Disseminate the Data to a larger Audience

# *The NHTS Community of Users*



Source: "National Household Travel Survey Data Use: An Overview"  
Prepared by: MacroSys Research and Technology for the Bureau of  
Transportation Statistics, 2005

# Several Challenges

- **Scientific Rigor**
- **Statistical Precision**
- **Growth of Technology**
- **Demographic Changes**
  - **Resources: COST**

# SCIENTIFIC RIGOR

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**All data are not equal**

- **Need rigorous scientific designs**
- **Data should produce statistically valid estimates**
- **Data should be relevant to policy makers**

# SCIENTIFIC RIGOR

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**Understand how to enhance the design with multiple collection modes**

- **Telephone vs. Cell phone**
- **Web-based**
- **Panels**
- **New technology: GPS units, Smart phone**



# Increase Data Quality

- **Lessen Respondent Burden**
  - Which survey questions are most important?
    - Which can be cut?
    - Can question wording be simplified and/or shortened?
- **Testing to reduce measurement error**
  - Level of Comprehension
  - Effectiveness of Instructions
  - Response categories: Hidden ones
- **Increase Coverage: use multi-mode to capture entire population**

# Challenge: Statistical Precision

- Increase state sample sizes in national sample
- Pursue hard-to-reach populations

# Technology Growth

- Explore utility and feasibility of collecting travel data with newer technologies (Smart Phone, iPads, GPS)
  - Testing needed
- Impact on travel
  - Telecommuting
  - Internet purchases and deliveries
  - Webinars replacing business trips

# Challenge of Demographic Changes

- Aging population
- Hispanic growth (50.5 million)
- Rapid regional changes
  - Metro areas
    - Some losing population
    - Others gaining
  - Abutting metro areas
  - Rural

# Challenge: Resources

- Cost
- Program size
- Add-On Program (Pool Funding)

# Initial Plan: Talk to Groups

- Household Travel Survey
- Survey Methods
- Statistical Sampling Experts
- National Survey Panels

# Wish List Results

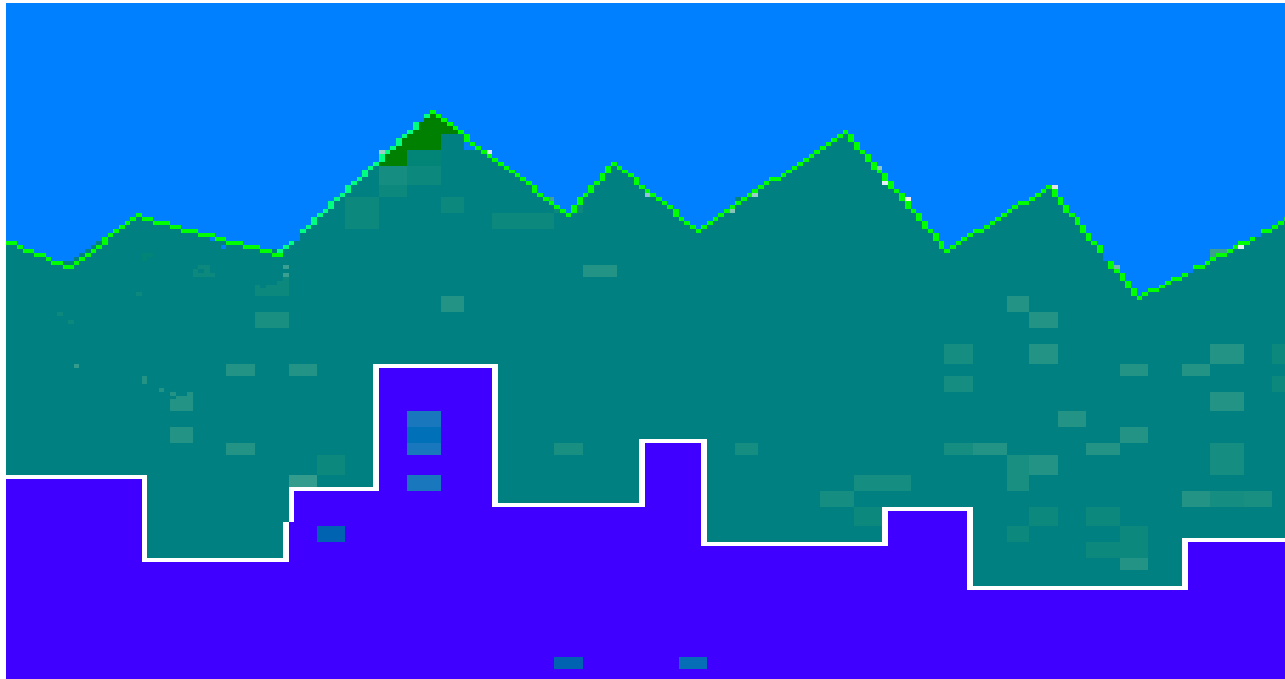
- A design:
  - ✓ Increases data quality (coverage, R burden, timeliness of data, response rates and measurement error)
  - ✓ Integrates with other data
  - ✓ Incorporates new technology
  - ✓ Transparent
- Open to new ideas
  - User Community
  - Panel of Experts to Review
  - Other National studies
- Increase wider audience of data users

# Wish List -- Design Elements

- 2013/14 NHTS
- Larger National HH component to allow some statewide estimates
- Inclusion of cell phone population
- Consideration of Address Based Sampling (ABS)
- Experimental subsample for testing new technologies
- Outreach to federal statistical agencies to explore quid pro quo scenarios



# 2013-2014 NHTS



Visit: <http://nhts.ornl.gov>