



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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Report on CMAP's Symposium on Surveying Hard-To-Reach Populations with an emphasis on Latino Households

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Introduction and Background

On February 18, 2011, CMAP hosted a Symposium on: Surveying Hard-To-Reach Populations with an emphasis on Latino Households.

This event precedes preparation of a new scope of work for travel surveys at CMAP that seeks to supplement the content of our 2007 Travel Tracker Survey while significantly departing from the standard methods of recruiting and interviewing survey participants. CMAP's use of survey data is outlined in [CMAP's Strategic Plan for Advanced Model Development](#) where the importance of a rich and diverse set of ongoing empirical data is defined.

The symposium consisted of a set of staff presentations followed by a moderated discussion among invited panelists. The panel was comprised of five experts with diverse professional standing.

The event was open to the public and ran from 9 a.m. to noon. Announcement of the event was made at the previous month's CMAP Board Meeting, on the agency's home page and via the CATMUGⁱ mail list. In total, about 40 people [participated](#) in the event either as presenter, panelist or audience member.

Panel

Jerry Campagna is the President and Founder of The MOST Inc., a change management and capacity-building firm, and MST Latino Inc., a Latino marketing/management consulting division based in the Chicago suburbs. Jerry's varied experiences as a Latino media and outreach expert, entrepreneur, and national sales executive gives him a unique set of talents in

“orchestrating” target marketing and management initiatives for both corporate and non-profit clients.

Eira Corral is the elected Village Clerk of Hanover Park, Illinois; a suburban community northwest of Chicago. Her professional experience has been with the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute (USHLI), a national non-profit and non-partisan organization. She managed national and statewide media campaigns and programs focused on civic participation and leadership development for high school and college students, community leaders, and professionals. She has engaged and trained leaders in strategizing a voter registration campaign and Get- Out-the-Vote campaign that has led to the civic participation for the 2008 election of over 62,000 eligible voters in more than eleven states. Ms. Corral earned her Bachelor of Arts from DePaul University with a double major in Political Science and Latino & Latin American Studies and a double minor in Community Service Studies and Commercial Spanish.

Javier Salas is the host of the Radio and TV morning show “Un Nuevo Día” at Univision Radio and Telefutura and is one of the most listened-to Spanish broadcasters in Chicago. He is a veteran of the Chicago radio airwaves having been on the air since 1992. Mr. Salas provides listeners with opinions and discussions about the important news of the day and showcases interviews, topics, debates, and correspondents from South and Central America, Mexico, and the US. He is considered one of the best communicators in the local Spanish Chicago market. The Illinois Secretary of State, The Governor of Illinois and several Mexican Federations have recognized him for his work in the community. Mr. Salas has received the EMMY Award, Microfono de Oro Award, and the Studs Terkel Award and is a Marconi Awards Nominee. Mr. Salas is very interested in Mexico-US politics that affect and benefit immigrant communities.

Dr. Stacey Bricka recently joined the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University as a research scientist, bringing with her 20 years of transportation research and survey experience. Prior to joining TTI, Stacey was Vice President for Research at PTV NuStats, where she designed and managed the 2007 Travel Tracker Survey for CMAP, as well as travel surveys in almost 50 regional and statewide travel surveys in support of transportation plan development, policy analysis, and travel demand modeling. She is an avid data analyst, evaluating travel behavior by geography, specific demographic characteristics (including the Latino population), and changes across time.

Elaine Murakami is a planner with Federal Highway Administration in the Office of Planning and specializes in Census and Transportation Planning applications. She is in her 19th year with FHWA and previously worked with the Puget Sound Regional Council. She has previously

chaired the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Committee on Travel Survey Methods. She has two master's degrees from USC, including one in urban planning.

Agenda:

9:00-9:10 – Welcome and Introductions

- Randy Blankenhorn, CMAP Executive Director

9:10-10:30 – Presentations

- CMAP's Travel Tracker Survey, Kermit Wies
- Difficult-to-Reach Households, Kermit Wies
- Latino Outreach at CMAP, Ricardo Lopez

10:40-noon – Moderated Discussion

- CMAP's New Survey Principles
- Audience Q&A

Welcome and Introductions

CMAP Executive Director Randy Blankenhorn began the proceedings by offering his perspectives on the important role surveys play in regional planning.

- Today's event is part of CMAP's ongoing commitment to gather the best objective information about the needs of our region. One way we do this is to conduct direct surveys among the region's residents and businesses.
- Information we gather through our Travel Tracker Survey helps us understand how people use our transportation system and how we can improve it to better meet their needs.
- Travel Surveys are very difficult. We ask very specific questions about people's households and travel habits. This makes some folks reluctant to participate.
- In fact, when we conducted our 2007 Travel Tracker Survey of over 10,000 households in the CMAP region, we fell far short obtaining a representative sample of the nearly 20% Latino Households in the region.
- When we examined the shortfall, we concluded that making numerous improvements to the way we conduct the survey would likely correct the problem.
- During Today's Symposium, my staff and our invited panel will propose and discuss some of these improvements. The panel discussion will help CMAP refine and defend our new survey techniques.

- This will also be an opportunity for those in the audience to get a preview of where we are headed as we seek your help in designing and implementing an improved Travel Tracker Survey among the region's Latino households.

Staff Presentations

Kermit Wies gave a [presentation](#) on the project background leading up to the Symposium. The presentation provides an overview of the original 2007 Travel Tracker survey and subsequent identification of systematic non-response among large, young, less educated and lower income households. It was also observed that Latino households were insufficiently represented in the response when compared to Census data. CMAP's hypothesis, put before the panel, was that redesigning the survey to appeal to Latino cultural sensibilities might help correct the low-response among large, young, less educated and lower income households in general. The correlation between these demographics and Latino self-identification in the Census was described.

Ricardo Lopez followed with an overview of CMAP's Latino outreach efforts, particularly as they related to the methods used during development of Go To 2040, the region's comprehensive regional plan. He offered specific examples of the techniques used for outreach, engagement and sustaining involvement in the Latino community. He directed audience panels to several documents pertaining to Go To 2040, including the report entitled [Latinos in Our Region](#), prepared as part of the agency's ongoing strategy analysis snapshot series. The purpose of this general presentation was to demonstrate and provide examples of CMAP's internal capacity and commitment to public engagement within the Latino community.

Moderated Discussion

Following a short break, the panel engaged in a moderated discussion around CMAP's newly proposed [survey principles](#). The moderator was not entirely successful in maintaining the line of questioning as originally planned. The panel, however, thoroughly covered these topics with the questions and comments they had accumulated during the presentations.

The panelists were very energetic in their response to CMAP's proposal to re-orient Travel Tracker as a community-based activity. From those panelists with expertise in Latino outreach, there was affirmation that their community feels particularly vulnerable at the hands of government and thus views an "aggressive" survey with suspicion. To counter this, however, the panel agreed that Latino cultural sensibilities are sufficiently community-oriented that the notion of responding to a questionnaire in order to assist in improving local conditions is appealing. In other words, Latino households will be more willing to participate when the link between participation and improving their local community is clear. Beyond this, however, there was little consensus on the precise medium for engagement; only that whatever medium was used needed to be propagated from within the community.

From those panelists with expertise in Survey Research, there was consent that interviewer anonymity, typically viewed as a way of ensuring respondents of confidentiality, may have the opposite effect when recruiting vulnerable populations. There remains, however, a concern among survey researchers that customizing survey design among various populations based on community norms and preferences may compromise the uniformity of the product and its use across a wide variety of applications.

ⁱ Chicago Area Travel Model User Group. CATMUG hosts monthly meetings at CMAP and maintains an e-mail contact list of about 100 interested professionals.