

## SECTION 8: APPENDIX

### Credits, Acknowledgements, and Resources

Several complementary surveys and studies were conducted by other agencies to better understand the market and transportation-land use link for homebuyers. These will be briefly discussed.

#### Strategies for Metropolitan Atlanta's Transportation and Air Quality (SMARTRAQ)<sup>62</sup>

The SMARTRAQ project began in 1998 when the Atlanta region's transportation plan was forecast to violate emissions standards under the federal Clean Air Act. SMARTRAQ's stated goal is to "develop a framework for assessing land use and transportation policies having the greatest potential for reducing the level of auto dependence and vehicle emissions in the Atlanta metropolitan area while sustaining the economic vitality and environmental health of the region."

Atlanta region's spread-out growth patterns were making it increasingly clear that addressing traffic congestion, choke points, and mobility would need a broader understanding of land use, transportation and air quality relationships. SMARTRAQ is a multidisciplinary collaboration including federal and state transportation, environmental and health agencies, a local foundation and other non-profit organizations, and university researchers.

#### Bias/Error

##### Methodological Bias

As with any survey mechanism, bias and error can affect the validity of the survey results. Does the CPS serve meaningfully and does it represent community values of the region? There are several issues of bias which should be mentioned:

1. Online surveys are often biased samples because the respondents are self-selected. Occasionally, survey respondents are motivated to participate that may encourage overrepresented answers to skew the results.
2. Distribution of the survey was done via the COMPASS mailing list, the COMPASS website, COMPASS-hosted workshops, and postcards to a random sample throughout the Treasure Valley. Postcards were sent to over 2,200 recipients. Unfortunately only a small percentage of postcard invitees participated in the survey. A number of reasons could be possible including: slow or no internet connections, lack of interest in the subject matter, feeling that their responses won't matter, etc. Participation from self-selected groups was strong but random mailings did not produce sufficient results, therefore there is not cross-sectional comparison between those that are self-selected and a control group.
3. COMPASS Website Participation. Although, the survey was limited to one response per website address, those wishing to delete cookies could have submitted multiple responses. Although the likelihood is low, it is possible.

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<sup>62</sup> *New Data for a New Era. A Summary of the SMARTRAQ Findings Linking Land Use, Transportation, Air Quality and Health in the Atlanta Region*

## Technological Bias

1. Technical Glitches. Although not reported, it is possible that participant's computers crashed erasing data entered.
2. Holistic Review. With visual surveys participants make simple assumptions about into complicity with a set of values and meanings intentionally or unintentionally structured into the survey sequence. Although possible, it is rare that participants would return to rate images after all the images were set to establish a context and then rank them at their own pace in a more thoughtful manner. Therefore, images were often psychologically ranked and compared to the most recent images.

## Content Bias

1. Photographs can be overly simplistic representations of an ideal therefore image surveys are about what someone wants the city to "look" like—not what it feels like to be there, or how it works.
2. Hundreds of examples for each type of residential building could have been used. The ones selected may or may not best represent the style, density, architecture, etc.
3. Each image was supplemented by text describing the type of building. The identification of the building type may or may not have overly influenced the rating of an image. Similarly, other information and data may have been helpful in the participation of the survey.

It is the equivalent of asking "do want a shiny new car, or a poke in the eye?"

--Participant

## Actual Behavior Varies from Stated Behavior

The CPS is based on stated behaviors, but what people say is not necessarily how they behave. Although participants may claim to prefer an image of a building type, when they actually look to purchase housing their criteria may be vastly different from their statements.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Nelson, A. Toward a New Metropolis: The Opportunity to Rebuild America. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University A Discussion Paper Prepared for The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program

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