

Frequently Asked Questions

1. General Inquiries

- **What are the goals of the study?**

The goal of the THATS study is to gain new insight into how best to improve transport systems in urban areas in the GTHA. How can mobility become more efficient? What do people expect from transport systems? How does the ongoing digitalization of various aspects of life influence the requirements put toward our transport systems? For more information, please refer to [THATS Study Information Sheet](#).

- **Who is conducting this project?**

This research project is conducted by the THATS team at the University of Toronto.

- **Why should I participate in this study?**

Mobility behavior in the GTHA is increasingly dynamic and diversified in its development. Traditional methods of data collection, such as travel diaries, are unable to incorporate this reality in an accurate manner. By conducting this survey, your data, along with more than 1,000 other study participants, will aid us in understanding current mobility behavior and allow us to contribute to improving the transport system in the GTHA (e.g., building roads or expanding public transport).

- **How can I participate in the study?**

The invitation email you received includes a link to our sign-up survey and a personal code that you may use to log in to the survey. After completing the online survey, you and the household members you invite will be sent an email with instructions to join the smartphone study. Our website contains information on how to install and activate the app. We will track your mobility over the course of one week (7 days) via the app. Tracking takes place in the background, but you need to validate the mode and purpose of the tracked trips and answer some daily questions. After you successfully complete your study participation, you will be eligible for an incentive you received the information about in the invitation email.

- **What are the inclusion criteria for participating in the smartphone study?**

To participate in the smartphone study, you need to fulfil the following requirements:

- 15+ years old (by May 2023).
- Live in the GTHA
- Use of a smartphone that can install the tracking app (Android or iOS).

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- Be able to walk 200m without help.
- Must not be staying outside the GTHA for more than two nights over the next 7 days.
- Agree to the terms described in the consent form.
- **What is the workload associated with participating in the smartphone study?**
 - Sign-up survey: 10 minutes
 - Download and activate the application: 5 minutes
 - Validate the mode, and purpose of your trips and complete the daily survey: 5 to 10 minutes per day
- **What are the requirements to receive the incentive?**

We are pleased to inform you that as a sign of gratitude to participate in our survey, you will be considered for the incentive you received the information about in the invitation email if you meet the following requirements:

- Receipt of the invitation email (including the participant registration code) by the primary household member and app installation instruction email by the primary household member and all invited household members.
 - Completion of the sign-up survey. (Only for the primary household members. The household members invited by the primary member will not need to complete the sign-up survey)
 - Installing the survey application (Ma Mobilite), giving all the access to the application required for tracking (location, ...) and completing the tracking survey over the 7 days of the study period. You need to label your daily travel records by choosing the mode and purpose of your trips. Additionally, you need to complete a daily survey at the end of each day.
 - The travel diary data provided in the application and the activity diary data provided in the daily surveys should reasonably match regarding the timing of activities and trips.
- **Is my data kept safe?**

Your private information is of the utmost importance to us, especially with regard to the collection, saving, and using of personal tracking data. The collected data are under no circumstances distributed to third parties and are only used for research purposes. You reserve the right to block or delete all of your data at any time during the study without giving reasons. All your data will be used strictly anonymously for the analysis of the study. Find more details on data privacy in the [Data Privacy Notice](#).

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- **Can I withdraw in the middle of the survey?**

Yes, you may withdraw from the survey at any time during the study and without stating any reason. You can do so by sending an email to thats@utoronto.ca.

2. Sign-Up survey

- **What is the Sign-Up survey about?**

The first stage of the survey involves completing the web-based sign-up survey which is to be completed by the primary household member who received the activation code in their invitation email. The link to the sign-up survey is sent by invitation emails to the contacted household members. This survey asks various questions to gather sociodemographic and mobility information about both the main and other household members. Please note that household members invited by the primary member do not need to complete the sign-up survey.

- **Where do I get a registration code from?**

Only invited participants have access to a registration code. You will find the registration code on the invitation letter sent by the THATS team. If you have not received an invitation letter from us and would like to participate in our study, please send an email to thats@utoronto.ca.

- **Why is my registration code invalid?**

This happens when you have already used your registration code. Please note that your registration code is valid only for you and can be used only once. If your registration code is invalid and you have not used it before, or if you have not received the registration code in your invitation email, please send an email to thats@utoronto.ca, and we will get in touch with you shortly.

3. Application usage

- **What is the name of the smartphone app?**

The application used for this study is called Ma Mobilite and is developed by FABRIQUE DES MOBILITÉS QUÉBEC. It is a simple tracking application that asks you to validate your mode and trips and complete your daily survey.

- **Where can I download the app?**

Use the following links:

- [IOS](#)
- [Android](#)

To get instructions on how to install the application, please refer to the [manual](#).

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- **What will my data be used for?**

The data you provide by using Ma Mobilite will be used to improve our knowledge of mobility. It will help us better understand the changes in behavior regarding mobility, hence better react to citizens' needs.

- **Who has access to my data?**

The data collected will be accessible by THAT'S team and will only be processed by La FabMob and Coop Carbone. The collected data are not distributed to third parties and only used for research purposes and the data will be stored for future research projects in the University of Toronto data archive, such that new methods and research questions may be analyzed.

- **Does the app have access to my location?**

Yes, enabling this feature is crucial for the app to work correctly.

- **Does my location have to be activated at all times?**

Yes, in order to function and record movements, the application must have access to the location at all times. Therefore, the location must be enabled.

- **Does the application require mobile data?**

Ma Mobilite does not use any mobile data and requires very little background data, it can be estimated at 1 MB per month of use.

- **Does it drain my phone battery?**

Ma Mobilite is an ergonomic application that does not drain your battery more than other apps. The app is in standby mode and starts recording as soon as it detects a movement.

- **How can I request the suppression of my data?**

You can request the suppression of your data easily by going to your profile section in the Ma Mobilite app. First, click on the identifier to copy it, and then click on "delete my data". A page should open. Paste the identifier where it is required, and write your email address with which you identified yourself when you first used the app. Then, check the box "I wish to delete my data" and click on "submit my request".

Once the deletion request has been processed, you will receive an email confirming that the data has been deleted.

It may take up to 30 business days to process such a request.

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- **How can I get a copy of my data?**

In the profile section, there is an option “download json dump”. Clicking on it allows you to choose the date of the data you want to download. Once validated, the file will be downloaded to your phone.

For a copy of all the usage data, please write a request to thats@utoronto.ca.

- **Do I have to give the app permission to view my files?**

The application must be able to access the phone’s files in order to store data on the phone’s hard drive.

- **I moved and the application did not register my movement.**

It sometimes happens that a movement is not recorded. This can be explained by:

- The closing of the application through the phone system for optimization.
- Incorrectly configured settings, such as disabled location, or the application does not have access to the user’s physical activity.
- Once the app is turned off by the system, the app is still open but does not save any data. The system forces the application to cease, causing conflicts in the application’s functionality.

If you checked all the above items and still have an issue, please send an email to thats@utoronto.ca.

- **My movement is not displayed correctly.**

The movement may not be displaced correctly in the logbook immediately after it is recorded, it may take some time for it to be displayed correctly.

If, after a few hours, the movement is still not displayed correctly, force the synchronization to transfer the data to the server, so that it can process and analyze it.

- **My dashboard is empty even if movements have been made.**

This can be explained by:

- The data is recent and is not yet displayed on the dashboard. A minimum of 24 hours is required for the data to appear on the dashboard.
- The data has not been analyzed on the server. This problem can occur and can affect the display on the dashboard.
- The data analysis was performed but the server did not determine the correct mode of transportation used during the trips.

To fix this problem, try to synchronize by clicking on the button at the top right of the dashboard. If you checked all the above items and still have an issue, please send an email to thats@utoronto.ca.

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- **My movements are in draft and there is no associated mode to them.**

If there is no mode associated with a movement and it is displaced on the diary page, the data has not been analyzed in the server yet. We kindly ask you to validate the mode, purpose of your trips and complete your daily survey.

- **How do I know if the tracking is working?**

You can tell the tracking has been successful if you can see tracks (paths) and stays (points) on the map on the top of the screen of a given day. You can only validate these recorded tracks and stays. You will know that the information is ready to be validated, thus tracked, when it appears in the calendar. Please write an email to thats@utoronto.ca, if you notice that the tracking does not work.

- **Can I travel abroad during the smartphone study?**

This study requires you to actively track your movements in Canada and you must not be staying outside the GTHA for more than two nights over the next 7 days.

- **Can I turn off the tracking during the smartphone study?**

We recommend that you try to keep your smartphone on and the tracking active for the entire duration of the study. Deactivating the tracking, logging out of the app, or turning off your smartphone can negatively affect the quality of the study results. If you do not track, you are unable to validate the mode and purposes of your trips. This means that the participation won't be successful. Visit the [manual](#) for detailed information.

- **I have technical problems with the app.**

Please report any technical malfunctions to thats@utoronto.ca.