The Travel Trends of Teens and Young Adults Safety Implications

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Vehicle Miles Traveled

YOUTH AND TRAVEL

Vehicle Miles Traveled

A Driving Disinterest?


Source: Department of Transportation
Questions

1. Is the popularity of driving waning among youth?

2. If so, why?

3. What are the safety implications?
WHAT’S THE STORY?

Millennials

URBAN LIFESTYLE
WHAT’S THE STORY?

Millennials

GREEN ATTITUDES

URBAN LIFESTYLE
WHAT’S THE STORY?
WHAT’S THE STORY?

Millennials

GRADUATED DRIVER’S LICENSING

GREEN ATTITUDES

URBAN LIFESTYLE

GAS PRICES

UCLA
WHAT’S THE STORY?

Millennials

GRADUATED DRIVER’S LICENSING

GREEN ATTITUDES

URBAN LIFESTYLE

GAS PRICES

RECESSION

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Institute of Transportation Studies
WHAT’S THE STORY?

Millennials

- Graduated Driver’s Licensing
- Green Attitudes
- Urban Lifestyle
- Gas Prices
- Recession
- Delayed Adult Transitions
WHAT’S THE STORY?

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WHAT’S THE STORY?

- Millennials
- Graduated Driver’s Licensing
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- Alternative Transportation
- Gas Prices
- Recession
- Delayed Adult Transitions

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NEXT GENERATION OF TRAVEL
U.S. Federal Highway Administration

FOUR PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

1. Through 2009 (and the recession), there was a significant decline in travel among youth (ages 15-26).
2. Decline was largely explained by the downturn in the economy.
3. Youth (and older adults) travel fewer miles in dense urban areas (where they are more likely to use transit), but...
   - Dense urban areas comprise less than 5% of all U.S. neighborhoods
   - Driving is highest & growth fastest in sprawling new developments
4. Young adults who don’t drive much grew by ~50% between 1995 and 2009
   - While some are highly mobile multi-modals, many more are car-less and mobility disadvantaged
EXPLAINING PERSONAL MILES TRAVELED (PMT)
YOUTH (15-26) TRAVELED FEWER MILES IN 2009 THAN IN 1990 AND 2001

WHAT EXPLAINS YOUTH PERSONAL MILES OF TRAVEL (PMT)?

- Employment status has the largest effect on travel.
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- Younger cohorts do travel a bit less.
- Technology is a complement to travel.
- Changes in driver’s licensing regulations have had little effect.

The bar chart shows the impact of various factors on youth personal miles of travel. The red bars represent more travel, while the blue bars represent less travel. The diagram indicates that unemployment has the most significant effect, followed by younger cohorts and technology as complements to travel. Changes in driver’s licensing regulations have had a minimal impact.
SEVEN NEIGHBORHOOD TYPES

- **Rural** (21% of tracts)
- **New Development** (22% of tracts)
- **Patchwork** (18% of tracts)
- **Established Suburbs** (15% of tracts)
- **Urban Residential** (15% of tracts)
- **Old Urban** (4% of tracts)
- **Mixed Use** (6% of tracts)
HOW DO NEIGHBORHOOD TYPES AFFECT TRAVEL? (compared to rural neighborhoods)

- Much less driving in old urban neighborhoods
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- Much less driving in old urban neighborhoods
- **But, they are only 4% of all U.S. neighborhoods**
HOW DO NEIGHBORHOOD TYPES AFFECT TRAVEL? (compared to rural neighborhoods)

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- Effects of all other neighborhoods are notably similar
HOW DO NEIGHBORHOOD TYPES AFFECT TRAVEL? (compared to rural neighborhoods)

• Much less driving in old urban neighborhoods
• Effects of all other neighborhoods are notably similar
• Except the most sprawling new developments
• Which account for 22% of all neighborhoods
TRAVELER TYPES
FOUR TYPES OF YOUNG ADULTS

Drivers
Long-distance Trekkers
Multimodals
Car-less
DAILY TRIPS BY TRAVELER TYPE

- Car-less: 2 trips
- Multimodal: 5 trips
- Trekker: 4 trips
- Driver: 4 trips

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CHANGE IN YOUTH TRAVELERS BY INCOME (1995 to 2009)

Percentage point change

Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5

Driver Trekker Multimodal Car-less
CHANGE IN YOUTH TRAVELERS BY INCOME (1995 to 2009)

Percentage point change

Q1  Q2  Q3  Q4  Q5

Driver  Trekker  Multimodal  Car-less

-10%  -5%  0%  5%  10%
In 2009:

- Drivers: 78-80%
- Long-distance Trekkers: 3-4%
- Without-cars: 13-15%
- Multimodals: 3-5%
**REPRISE: FOUR PRINCIPAL FINDINGS**

1. Through 2009 (and the recession), there was a significant decline in travel among youth.

2. The decline was largely explained by the downturn in the economy.

3. Youth (and older adults) travel fewer miles in dense urban areas (where they are more likely to use transit), but...
   - Dense urban areas comprise less than 5% of all U.S. neighborhoods
   - Driving is highest & growth fastest in sprawling new developments

4. Young adults who don’t drive much grew by ~50% between 1995 and 2009
   - While some are highly mobile multi-modals, many more are car-less and mobility disadvantaged
IMPLICATIONS FOR SAFETY

• It is premature to argue that driving among youth is passé
  – There will still be a lot of driving and, therefore, driving-related safety concerns

• There are delayed transitions to adulthood that include delayed driver’s licensing
  – % licensed has declined over time among almost all ages
  – The largest decline in licensing has been among youth; many delay getting their license
  – Drivers will tend to be older than in the past
  – The effect could be associated with (a) less risky behavior and fewer crashes and/or (b) less experience and more crashes
INCREASING VMT

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% of LICENSED DRIVERS BY AGE

Source: U.S. Highway Statistics (various years).
CHANGE IN LICENSING BY AGE
2000 to 2014
IMPLICATIONS FOR SAFETY (cont’d)

- Use of technology appears to be a complement rather than a substitute for travel
  - Young drivers will be driving AND reliant on technology (e.g. smartphones, etc.)
  - Distracted drivers will continue to be a safety issue

- Driving is highest in outlying suburban areas where (a) the lion share of the growth continues to take place even among young adults and (b) there are few other travel options
  - Faster speeds but less congestion
  - High speeds are associated with higher crash and fatality rates

- Caveat: our analysis of the microdata is only through 2009
Questions, Comments?

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