

MOBILITY TRENDS BRIEF

GEOGRAPHY



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Highway
Administration



TRENDING

2025

Where people live can have a significant impact on travel demand. For example, nearly 12 percent of households in large metro areas have no vehicles; however, other modes, such as transit and ridesharing, are often widely available in these areas.¹ Understanding shifts in land-use patterns or migration flows from urbanized areas to rural areas can help policymakers make proactive decisions and maintain an efficient transportation system amid changing demographics and population densities.

Where People Live

People in different regions have different household and travel characteristics that reflect unique regional differences, such as population diversity, modal options, and the road network.

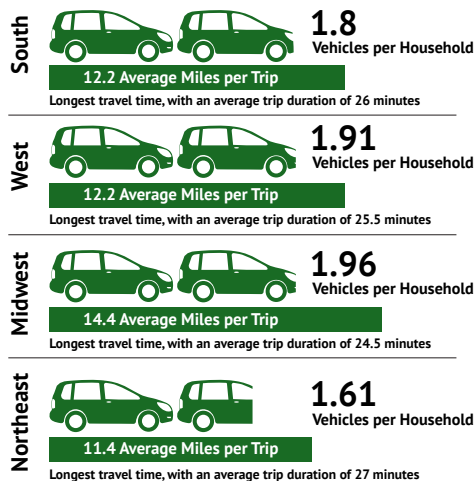
From 2021 to 2022, smaller counties tended to have increases in net domestic migration while larger counties (population > 500,000) saw decreases in net migration. Such shifts in population distribution have a direct effect on transportation demand patterns.

People in metropolitan areas with populations between 250,000 and 1 million tend to make more trips per day on average than people living in areas of 3 million or more people.² These larger metropolitan areas likewise have fewer vehicles per household on average as compared to all other geographies.

Urban, Suburban, and Rural Trends

Areas experiencing rapid population growth will naturally see an uptick in the need for transportation services. Suburban areas with aging populations might require additional safe transportation options tailored to the travel patterns of older residents. Conversely, rural locales witnessing an influx of remote workers, as occurred following the pandemic in 2020, may see a surge in demand for local travel options.

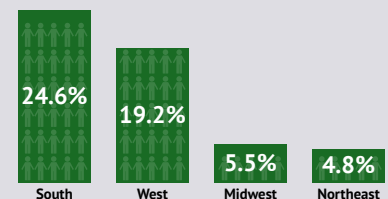
Travel Time and Vehicles per Household by Region, 2022³



TRENDS BY REGION

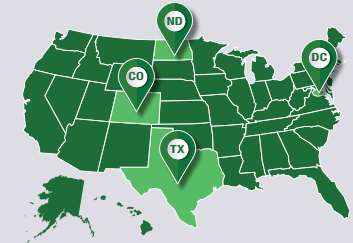
Greater growth in the South is a longstanding trend.

Population Growth Since 2003⁵

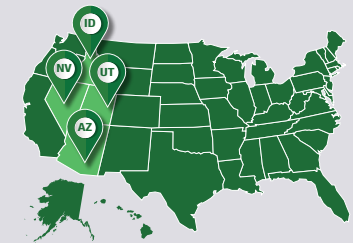


TRENDS BY STATE⁶

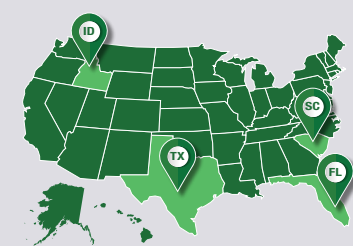
- Between 2012 and 2015, North Dakota, the District of Columbia, Texas, and Colorado saw the greatest increase in population.



- Between 2016 and 2019, the greatest increases in population occurred in Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona.



- Since 2020, States with the largest increase in population were Idaho, Florida, South Carolina, and Texas.



In 2022, nearly 57 percent of the population lived in large metro areas and 35 percent lived in midsize cities and suburban areas, while less than 9 percent of the population lived in smaller, more rural communities.⁴

Source: FHWA, Office of Transportation Policy Studies. Contact us at PolicyStudiesFeedback@dot.gov.

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Notes and Sources

1. Federal Highway Administration, *Summary of Travel Trends: 2022 National Household Travel Survey*, (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2021), Report No. FHWA-HPL-24-009, accessed June 15, 2025, https://nhts.ornl.gov/assets/2022/pub/2022_NHTS_Summary_Travel_Trends.pdf.
2. Federal Highway Administration, *Summary of Travel Trends: 2022 National Household Travel Survey*.
3. Federal Highway Administration, *Summary of Travel Trends: 2022 National Household Travel Survey*.
4. U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Rural-Urban Continuum Codes” (Economic Research Service, 2025), accessed June 15, 2025, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/>.
5. U.S. Census Bureau, “United States Population Growth by Region,” U.S. and World Population Clock, accessed June 15, 2025, https://www.census.gov/popclock/data_tables.php?component=growth.
6. U.S. Census Bureau, “United States Population Growth by Region.”

Graphics: Federal Highway Administration, Office of Transportation Policy Studies.

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