

MOBILITY TRENDS POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Highway
Administration



TRENDING

2025

Transportation use in the United States is changing, driven by evolving demographics and shifting lifestyles. Understanding the people who travel—how needs and preferences vary across population groups—is critical in assessing future travel demand, program viability, and policy impacts.

The U.S. population is growing, and with more people comes more trips. However, average daily trips per person dropped from 4.1 in 2001 to 2.1 in 2022—a 49-percent decline.¹ This trend suggests that people's travel needs and preferences are changing.

An aging U.S. population is becoming a short-term trend that is shaping current transportation patterns. Americans aged 65 and older now make up 17.3 percent of the population.² These adults often travel during off-peak hours, adopt technology at lower rates, and present unique safety challenges, especially as the transportation system becomes more automated and multimodal.

Since 2000, the 35- to 49-year-old age cohort has declined in size by 4 percent.³ This is noteworthy because the core worker age cohort (35 to 54 years of age) makes 31 percent of all trips.⁴ These trends will change, however, as millennials (born 1981–1996, 21.7 percent of the population) and Gen Zs (born 1997–2012, 20.7 percent of the population) continue to enter the job market, get married, and have children.⁵

Shrinking Households = Fewer Shared Trips⁶

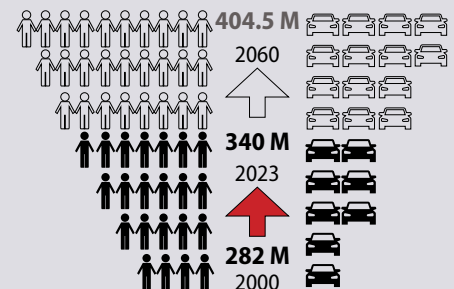
	Number of U.S. Households	Average Household Size
2010	117.5 Million 	2.59 
2022	131.2 Million 	2.50 



As household size drops, shared trips (e.g., school runs, errands) turn into more individual trips.

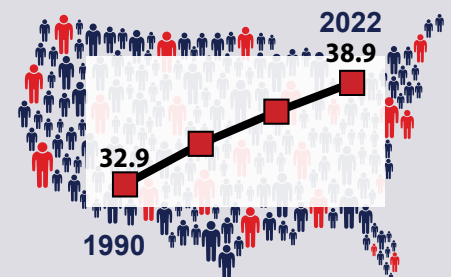
Across all income levels, U.S. households spend more each year on transportation than they do on food.

POPULATION GROWTH⁸



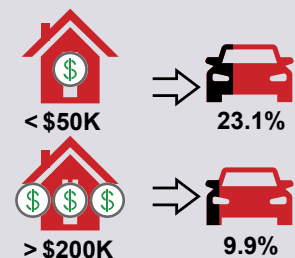
As the U.S. population continues to grow, so does overall transportation demand.

TRAVEL BY AGE⁹



The Nation's median age is nudging higher, and older adults tend to have different travel patterns than younger individuals.

INCOME¹⁰



Based on the share of after-tax income spent on transportation in 2022, lower-income households devote a **greater share of their income** to transportation expenses.



Notes and Sources

1. FHWA, *2022 National Household Travel Survey* (U.S. DOT, 2022), accessed September 26, 2024, <https://nhts.ornl.gov/>. Data series analysis.
2. U.S. Census Bureau, *America Is Getting Older*, press release, June 22, 2023, accessed September 26, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/population-estimates-characteristics.html>.
3. FHWA, *2022 National Household Travel Survey*, Address-Based Sample (ABS).
4. FHWA, *2022 National Household Travel Survey*, Address-Based Sample (ABS).
5. U.S. Census Bureau, *National Population by Characteristics: 2020–2024* (2024), accessed September 26, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-national-detail.html>.
6. U.S. Census Bureau, “Historical Households Tables – Table HH-4,” *Families and Living Arrangements* (November 2023), accessed October 8, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/families/households.html>; C. C. Rogers, “Age and Family Structure, by Race/Ethnicity and Place of Residence,” in *Rural Minority Trends and Progress*, 42–53 (U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 1999), accessed September 26, 2024, https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/_laserfiche/publications/40678/32992_aer731d_002.pdf.
7. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditure Surveys – Demographic Tables*, September 25, 2024, accessed September 27, 2024, <https://www.bls.gov/cex/tables/calendar-year/mean-item-share-average-standard-error.htm#cu-income>.
8. U.S. Census Bureau, *2017 National Population Projections Tables: Main Series*, accessed July 2, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/popproj/2017-summary-tables.html>.
9. U.S. Census Bureau, “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States [spreadsheet],” *National Population by Characteristics: 2020–2024* (June 25, 2024), accessed October 8, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-national-detail.html>.
10. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditure Surveys – Demographic Tables*, 2024.

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

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