Summary of Travel Trends
1969 to 2009

Based on the NPTS/NHTS Data Series

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Trends in Travel

• Major indicators, such as per capita trips and miles, seem to be slowing in growth
• Significant declines in trip rates for younger travelers
• Significant declines in shopping and errands for men and women
• High rates of on-line shopping, and
• High number of purchases delivers to households
• Rural areas show different patterns than urban
Since 1969, growth in vehicles outpaced other demographic changes.

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009 growth in travel indicators indexed to 1969
But the growth has been primarily in households with 2 or more vehicles:

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
Leading to large increases in VMT per household (until recently)
Recent trends are different:
Trip making per capita seem to be leveling off

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
Miles of travel per capita seems to be leveling off:

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
Significant declines in trips by 16-35 year olds...

Source: McGuckin’s analysis of NHTS data series
Per Capita trip rates have declined more for men:

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
Over the last 40 years, shopping and errands grew faster than other types of trips:

**Total Travel by General Category, 1977 to 2009**

**Source:** McGuckin’s analysis of NHTS data series
But lately, shopping and errands have shown declines for both men and women.

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
Households with children are more likely to shop on-line and have purchases delivered:

**Number of On-Line Purchases per Household**

- All Households: 5.2
- Households without Children: 3.0
- Households with Children 5-15: 2.1
- Households with Children 16-21: 4.5

**Number of On-Line Purchases Delivered**

- All Households: 4.2
- Households without Children: 2.4
- Households with Children 5-15: 1.6
- Households with Children 16-21: 3.7

Source: McGuckin’s analysis of NHTS data series
Nearly 9 percent of workers work exclusively at home, and another 6 percent have that option.
About 90 percent of workers commute by POV, that has remained virtually unchanged since 1969.

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009, 1969 did not include ‘Walk’
Commuters on transit and in vehicles travel about the same distance, but transit is much slower:

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
Density and vehicle ownership is highly correlated...

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
Over the last two decades, Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) grew faster in rural areas than urban:

Source: McGuckin’s analysis of NHTS data series
Households in rural areas are affected most by increasing gas costs:

Source: McGuckin’s analysis of NHTS data series
Speed of vehicle travel has declined in urban areas of all sizes, but not rural areas:

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
The vehicle fleet continues to age:

Source: NHTS data series, Summary of Travel Trends 2009
Areas for Further Research

• We should study variability in major indicators based on geography

• We need to look at required sample sizes in a new way (based on confidence limits for major travel indicators)

• Important issues for policy going forward include:
  • Trends in access to medical
  • The effect of increasing on-line purchases on commercial delivery of goods to households
We should study the effect of geography on our basic indicators of travel:

95% CI - VMT per Household

Source: Authors analysis of 2009 NHTS with margin of error confidence interval (CI)
We need to understand the variability in important measures and the impact on sample size:

95% CI - Mean Vehicle Trip Length

Source: Authors analysis of 2009 NHTS with margin of error confidence interval (CI)
Looking forward, we should pay heed to trends in access to medical care:

The number of trips for medical care, and the average distance, are both increasing.

Source: Nancy McGuckin and Yuki Nakamoto’s analysis of NHTS
In summary:

- Without sound data on travel behavior we cannot see where we have been and where we are going.
- This is especially important at times of real change (such as now):
  - Trends seem to be slowing or reversing: growth in per capita travel.
  - Demographic shifts: 1/3 of households have no worker.
  - New technology is shifting the source of travel: internet use = home delivery.
- New analysis tools allow better data analysis (e.g., margin of error) which informs data collection (e.g., sample size).