A Walk Through Time
Changes in the American Commute

U.S. Census and the
National Household Travel Survey
June 2003
Nancy McGuckin, Travel Behavior Analyst
Nanda Srinivasan, Cambridge Systematics Inc.
In the last forty years there’s been:

- Changes in family structure and increase in vehicle availability
- Changes in the working population
- Increases in private vehicle use and significant increases in commute time
- Growth in non-work travel changing the landscape of our peak periods—A trend expected to continue
Changing Family Patterns

In 1960 61% of the households had:
- a father working outside the home,
- a homemaker mother, and
- three children

In 2000 67% of households are not nuclear family:
- 28% are married with no children at home
- 26% are living alone
- 13% are other related or unrelated

U.S. Census
More single-person households were added than other types...1990 - 2000

- Single Person Households
- Single Parent Households
- Married Households without Children
- Married Households with Children

U.S. Census
Households are getting smaller with more vehicles...
Many households have multiple vehicles …

The chart shows the number of households with different numbers of vehicles in 1960 and 2000. In 1960, there were more households with zero vehicles and fewer with one vehicle compared to 2000. The number of households with two or more vehicles increased significantly from 1960 to 2000. The United States Census Bureau provided the data.
Even though you can only drive one car at a time, more vehicles add more miles of travel....
Changing Workforce

In 1960:
- 38 percent of all women work, but few women with young children go to work
- Majority of families have only one worker

In 2000:
- 61 percent of women work, including two-thirds of women with children under 6.
- Shift to dual-earner families, higher income households, and one vehicle per worker

U.S. Census
Change in Population, Workers and Drivers 1969 - 2001

- Percent Change in Population 16+: 52.7% (Men), 49.7% (Women)
- Percent Change in Drivers: 63.0%
- Percent Change in Workers: 61.3%

NPTS Data Series
Two-thirds of U.S. adults are workers (67%),

145 million workers compared to 71 million non-workers.

Each worker travels on average 12 miles more per day, or

1.74 billion more miles a year than non-workers;

That is 73 percent of total miles.
The worker boom is over...
Millions of added workers per decade--U.S. Census
More workers and more cars on the road…

Millions of Workers commuting by POV—U.S. Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>81.3</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>99.6</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>112.7</td>
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A Real Shift to Longer Commutes...

U.S. Census

Commutes over 30 minutes one-way

Commutes over 45 minutes one-way
However, commuting as a proportion of all travel is declining...
Since 1990 the average American added more recreation, errands and shopping than work trips.
Some of these trips have been added in stops on the way home from work (trip chains)

1995 NPTS
All Vehicles in Motion—The Changing Peak Period

NHTS 2001
Changes in family structure, workforce and vehicle availability primarily effected mode choice in the 1980s.

People may have shifted to POV and drive alone to save travel time.
In the 1990s travel times have really shown significant increases...how will people respond?

Expect a shift in departure times as workplaces become more flexible and people try to minimize their travel time.
Increased travel time to work (Census) may indicate the effects of a better economy, sprawl, congestion, etc. Further research is necessary at small geography to untangle these issues.

Increased total time in travel may be the effect of added trips for non-work purposes, either on the work trip (trip chaining), weekend and evening trips, or increased trip making by non-workers (especially retired).
The purposes of the growth in travel is changing...

- Increased travel for non-work purposes is discretionary travel, social, recreational, and shopping.

- What will happen with the coming changes in the workforce (such as retiring baby-boomers) and discretionary travel?

- Stay Tuned!