

America in 2013

Focus on the Generations



**Urban Land
Institute**

Infrastructure Initiative



**Urban Land
Institute**

Terwilliger Center for Housing

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About Us



Since 1982, Belden Russonello Strategists LLC has helped nonprofits, political campaigns, news media, and other clients understand the relationships between issues and motivations for action, whether it is rethinking policy, attracting new members, or changing attitudes and behavior.



ULI's Infrastructure Initiative works to promote more sustainable infrastructure investment choices and to foster an improved understanding of the links between infrastructure and land use.



ULI's Terwilliger Center for Housing engages in a multifaceted program of work that furthers the development of mixed-income, mixed-use communities with a full spectrum of housing affordable to all, a critical aspect of ULI's core mission of "providing leadership in the responsible use of land."

Learn more about "America in 2013" at www.uli.org/communitysurvey.



Focus on War Babies and the Silent Generation

What do America’s oldest residents desire when it comes to housing, transportation, and community choices? This fact sheet shares key findings from “America in 2013” about the war babies and the silent generation.

“America in 2013” is a national survey conducted by Belden Russonello Strategists LLC on behalf of the ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing and the ULI Infrastructure Initiative.

The Oldest Generations Share Similar Attitudes on Housing, Transportation, and Community Choices

The silent generation, born before 1931, and war babies, born between 1932 and 1946, are the smallest generations in America in numbers. Combined, the war babies (currently age 67 to 82) and members of the silent generation (age 83 and older) account for 35 million people. These generations hold very similar attitudes on community preferences and have been combined for this analysis.

War babies and the silent generation are among the *least* affluent of America’s generations: 49 percent of members of these generations earn less than \$50,000 a year, and many live on a fixed income. A number of other characteristics set members of these generations apart from their younger counterparts: 61 percent are women, compared with 52 percent of the overall population, and 41 percent live alone, compared with 17 percent of Americans overall.

Ethnicity, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
White	80	69
Latino	9	13
African American	6	12

Household Income, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
Under \$25,000	23	21
\$25,000–\$50,000	26	25
\$50,000–\$75,000	15	14
Over \$75,000	6	28

Education Level, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
High school or less	49	40
Some college	27	31
College	15	18
Postgraduate	9	10

The Oldest Americans Are Highly Satisfied with the Quality of Life in Their Community

The oldest Americans overwhelmingly say that they are very satisfied with the quality of life in their community. Sixty-seven percent of the oldest Americans say this, compared with 49 percent of the U.S. population overall. What's more, they are more likely than the broader population to say they expect this high quality of life to continue.

Satisfaction with Community's Quality of Life, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
Very satisfied	67	49
Somewhat satisfied	28	38
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	7
Very dissatisfied	3	5

Impression of Trend of Quality of Life in the Community, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
Better	16	19
Worse	10	17
Same	72	63

War Babies/Silent Generation: Small-Town Dwellers

America's oldest generations tend to live in smaller communities, with 39 percent currently in small towns. About a quarter of the members of these generations live in the suburbs.

Current and Preferred Community Type, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation, current	War babies/silent generation, preferred	All adults, current	All adults, preferred
Rural	15	16	15	24
Small town	39	33	32	26
Suburbs	24	18	21	17
Medium-sized city	13	15	17	16
Big city	9	10	14	12

Many Older Americans Plan to Age in Place

Twenty-two percent of the members of these generations expect to move in the next five years, the lowest percentage of any generation. These oldest Americans expect to be able to age in their own homes.

These findings parallel those discussed by John McIlwain, ULI senior resident fellow and ULI/J. Ronald Terwilliger Chair for Housing, in his report *Housing in America: The Baby Boomers Turn 65*. McIlwain cites the growing popularity among older Americans of aging in place and living alone.ⁱ As these older generations continue to age in their homes and communities, new models of supportive living may be needed for them. In *Housing in America*, McIlwain identifies alternatives to traditional senior care facilities, including multigenerational living.

Moving Statistics, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
Moved in past five years	19	32
Likely to move in next five years	22	42

Most Older Americans Own Their Home, But Many Are Skeptical of Homeownership as an Investment

Seventy-four percent of the war babies and members of the silent generation own their home; however, only 55 percent consider homeownership a good investment, the smallest percentage of any generation.

Homeownership Statistics, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
Own primary residence	74	66
Rent primary residence	26	32
See homeownership as good investment	55	71

Few Members of Oldest Generations Commute to Work

Only 8 percent of these oldest Americans commute to work or school regularly. Those that are still commuting travel by car. Sixty-five percent of the oldest Americans report that public transportation is available in their community, slightly lower than the U.S. average of 69 percent.

Transportation Statistics, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
Commute to work	8	63
Commute by car	91	85
Public transit available	65	69

Compact Development Appeals to Half of the Oldest Americans

Fifty-one percent of the oldest Americans say they prefer three or more of the community attributes typically associated with compact development.

Like the baby boomers, many members of these generations would give up living in a larger home in exchange for a shorter commute. Sixty-five percent of this cohort would choose a smaller house and a shorter commute over a larger house with a longer commute, compared with 61 percent of Americans overall (and 72 percent of baby boomers).

Community Attribute Preferences, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage naming listed attribute

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
Shorter commute/smaller home	65	61
Close to mix of shops, restaurants, and offices	51	53
Mix of incomes	47	52
Public transportation options	48	51
Mix of homes	44	48
<i>Percentage choosing three or more compact development attributes</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>54</i>

Distance from Medical Care Is Important to the Oldest Americans

For the oldest Americans, schools are less important than for the U.S. population as a whole. Instead, distance to medical care rises to the top as a key consideration, just behind neighborhood safety.

Community Characteristic Importance Rankings, War Babies/Silent Generation versus All Adults

Percentage ranking each characteristic 6 or higher in importance on a scale of 1 to 10

	War babies/silent generation	All adults
Neighborhood safety	92	92
Quality of local public schools	68	79
Space between neighbors	70	72
Distance to medical care	78	71
Short distance to work or school	57	71
Walkability	69	70
Distance to shopping/entertainment	69	66
Distance to parks/recreational areas	60	64
Distance to family/friends	66	63
Convenience of public transportation	56	52

ⁱ John K. McIlwain, *Housing in America: The Baby Boomers Turn 65* (Washington, D.C.: ULI, 2012), 38–45.



Focus on the Baby Boomer Generation

What do baby boomers desire when it comes to housing, transportation, and community choices? This fact sheet shares key findings from “America in 2013” about the baby boomer generation.

“America in 2013” is a national survey conducted by Belden Russonello Strategists LLC on behalf of the ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing and the ULI Infrastructure Initiative.

Baby Boomers Are More Affluent Than the U.S. Average

Members of the baby boom generation, now ages 48 to 66, were born between 1947 and 1965. A total of 73 million baby boomers currently live in the United States, making up 31 percent of the total adult population. Compared with the U.S. population overall, baby boomers have a higher income level. They are also more educated than the U.S. population as a whole and are less diverse.

Ethnicity, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers	All adults
White	79	69
Latino	9	13
African American	9	12

Household Income, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers	All adults
Under \$25,000	17	21
\$25,000–\$50,000	23	25
\$50,000–\$75,000	16	14
Over \$75,000	33	28

Education Level, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers	All adults
High school or less	37	40
Some college	31	31
College	19	18
Postgraduate	12	10

Baby Boomers Are More Likely Than the U.S. Average to Say Things Are Getting Worse

Baby boomers are relatively satisfied with the quality of their community, with satisfaction levels that tend to mirror those of the U.S. population as a whole. Eighty-four percent of baby boomers say they are very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of life in their community, roughly comparable with the 87 percent of the U.S. population overall with that opinion.

However, baby boomers are more likely than Americans overall to think life in their community is getting worse. Twenty-two percent of baby boomers have that impression, compared with 17 percent of the U.S. population overall.

Satisfaction with Community's Quality of Life, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers	All adults
Very satisfied	47	49
Somewhat satisfied	37	38
Somewhat dissatisfied	9	7
Very dissatisfied	5	5

Impression of Trend of Quality of Life in the Community, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers	All adults
Better	17	19
Worse	22	17
Same	61	63

Baby Boomers Are Found in Every Community Type, But Many Would Prefer Rural Living

Baby boomers are relatively evenly distributed across all community types: about 28 percent live in a small town, 20 percent in the suburbs, and 30 percent in a medium-sized or big city.

For baby boomers, the pull of rural living is strong. Baby boomers are more likely than the U.S. population overall to say that if they could live anywhere in the next five years, they would like to live in a more rural area, with 30 percent holding that view, rather than a big city, at 9 percent. Twenty-nine percent of baby boomers would like to live in a small town.

Current and Preferred Community Type, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers, current	Baby boomers, preferred	All adults, current	All adults, preferred
Rural	19	30	15	24
Small town	28	29	32	26
Suburbs	20	21	21	17
Medium-sized city	16	13	17	16
Big city	14	9	14	12

Many Baby Boomers Are Looking to Age in Place

Baby boomers, most of whom are now empty nesters—though 40 percent still have children at home—are not as anxious to move as the younger generations. Baby boomers may have less reason to move: 80 percent own their own home.

About three in ten baby boomers—31 percent—say they expect to change residence in the next five years, considerably less than the U.S. average of 42 percent, and lower than the percentages for gen Xers (41 percent) and gen Yers (63 percent).

Moving Statistics, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers	All adults
Moved in past five years	20	32
Likely to move in next five years	31	42

Most Baby Boomers Own Their Own Homes

Baby boomers overwhelmingly consider homeownership a good investment (73 percent); 80 percent own their own home. Most baby boomers who expect to move say that they likely will own their new home.

Homeownership Statistics, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers	All adults
Own primary residence	80	66
Rent primary residence	20	32
If moving, expect to own*	79	73
If moving, expect to rent*	20	25
See homeownership as good investment	73	71

*Among those likely or very likely to move in the next five years.

Many Baby Boomers Continue to Commute to Work, and They Commute by Car

About 58 percent of baby boomers commute to work or school three or more days a week, and the vast majority commute by car. More than three in five (63 percent) of baby boomers report that public transportation is available in their community, slightly lower than the U.S. average of 69 percent.

Transportation Statistics, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers	All adults
Commute to work	58	63
Commute by car	90	85
Public transit available	63	69

Though Most Boomers Live in Single-Family Homes, Many Are Open to Other Options

Unlike previous generations, many baby boomers will need to continue working beyond retirement age, says John McIlwain, ULI senior resident fellow and ULI/J. Ronald Terwilliger Chair for Housing, in his report *Housing in America: The Baby Boomers Turn 65*. McIlwain attributes this change to concern about long-term financial security and the need to build suitable retirement savings, particularly as life expectancy for older Americans continues to rise.¹

Perhaps because of these concerns, there is a hint of an increased market for compact housing among this age group. Sixty-five percent of baby boomers who are looking to move have their sights set on a single-family home—a smaller percentage of this group than currently lives in such housing (76 percent). This is a contrast with every other generation, for which a higher percentage of movers want to be in a single-family home than currently live in one.

Current and Expected Housing Type, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage

	Baby boomers, current	Baby boomers, expected*	All adults, current	All adults, expected*
Single-family home	76	65	66	67
Apartment	11	11	18	15
Duplex, townhouse, or rowhouse	7	16	11	14

*Among those likely or very likely to move in the next five years.

Baby Boomers Desire Many of the Characteristics of Compact, Mixed-Use Development

Baby boomers stand out as the generation most likely to give up living in a larger home if it means they could have a shorter commute. Close to three-quarters of this cohort (72 percent) would choose a smaller house with a shorter commute over a larger house with a longer commute, compared with 61 percent of Americans overall.

Baby boomers are divided on their views of living in mixed-use communities close to shops, restaurants, and offices (49 percent preferring a mix, 50 percent preferring no mix) and show a preference for communities with a similar housing stock (55 percent similar and 42 percent a mix)

Community Attribute Preferences, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage naming listed attribute

	Baby boomers	All adults
Shorter commute/smaller home	72	61
Close to mix of shops, restaurants, and offices	49	53
Mix of incomes	53	52
Public transportation options	52	51
Mix of homes	42	48
<i>Percentage choosing three or more compact development attributes</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>54</i>

Baby Boomers Place a High Value on Safety and Schools

When asked to indicate how they view the importance of certain community characteristics, baby boomers' preferences closely mirror those of the broader U.S. population. Safety and schools top the list of considerations for baby boomers, followed by distance to medical care.

Baby boomers might be willing to forgo the large house, but among the generations they are neither the most nor least interested in living in communities close to shopping and entertainment. Sixty-seven percent rank this attribute 6 or higher in importance on a scale 1 of 10, compared with 71 percent of gen Yers and 58 percent of gen Xers. Baby boomers are also in the middle of the pack when it comes to rating the importance of being close to family and friends (60 percent rank this attribute 6 or higher), close to medical care (72 percent rank it 6 or higher), and walkability (67 percent rank it 6 or higher).

Community Characteristic Importance Rankings, Baby Boomers versus All Adults

Percentage ranking each characteristic 6 or higher in importance on a scale of 1 to 10

	Baby boomers	All adults
Neighborhood safety	92	92
Quality of local public schools	74	79
Space between neighbors	70	72
Distance to medical care	72	71
Short distance to work or school	67	71
Walkability	67	70
Distance to shopping/entertainment	67	66
Distance to parks/recreational areas	63	64
Distance to family/friends	60	63
Convenience of public transportation	50	52

ⁱ John K. McIlwain, *Housing in America: The Baby Boomers Turn 65* (Washington, D.C.: ULI, 2012), 15–19.



Focus on Generation X

What does generation X desire when it comes to housing, transportation, and community choices? This fact sheet shares key findings from “America in 2013” about generation X.

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Generation X Is More Affluent Than the U.S. Average

Members of generation X—Americans currently between the ages of 35 and 47—have been raising families during times of both economic boom and bust, and are better educated and more financially well off than most other generations. Born between 1966 and 1978, generation X is made up of 55 million Americans. Gen X is not a particularly diverse generation. The typical gen Xer is married with children, and 44 percent of this generation has an income of \$75,000 or more.

Ethnicity, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X	All adults
White	73	69
Latino	9	13
African American	8	12

Household Income, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X	All adults
Under \$25,000	13	21
\$25,000–\$50,000	17	25
\$50,000–\$75,000	15	14
Over \$75,000	44	28

Education Level, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X	All adults
High school or less	28	40
Some college	31	31
College	25	18
Postgraduate	14	10

Members of Gen X Tend to Be Highly Satisfied and Believe Life Is Getting Better

Gen Xers are very satisfied, with 91 percent saying they are very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of life in their community, compared with 87 percent of the U.S. population overall. Gen Xers also tend to believe that life in their community is getting better.

Satisfaction with Community's Quality of Life, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X	All adults
Very satisfied	51	49
Somewhat satisfied	40	38
Somewhat dissatisfied	4	7
Very dissatisfied	5	5

Impression of Trend of Quality of Life in the Community, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X	All adults
Better	21	19
Worse	18	17
Same	60	63

Gen X Prefers Suburban, Rural, and Small-Town Life

Gen X is not a very urban generation: 34 percent of gen Xers live in a small town, and 17 percent live in a rural area. Gen Xers also tend to prefer living in a smaller setting. Only 23 percent would like to live in a medium or big city, compared with 28 percent of Americans as a whole.

Current and Preferred Community Type, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X, current	Gen X, preferred	All adults, current	All adults, preferred
Rural	17	27	15	24
Small town	34	27	32	26
Suburbs	20	21	21	17
Medium-sized city	16	15	17	16
Big city	14	8	14	12

Generation X Is on the Move

Gen X is a generation that is moving around: about 31 percent of its members have moved in the past five years, and 41 percent expect to move in the next five. These numbers are comparable with those for the U.S. population overall, but are somewhat lower than those for gen Y, which is the generation *most* likely to have moved or expect to move.

Moving Statistics, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X	All adults
Moved in past five years	31	32
Likely to move in next five years	41	42

Gen X Is a Generation of Homeowners

Most members of gen X own their own home and, if they move, they expect to own the next one, too. It is perhaps not surprising then that 79 percent of gen Xers consider homeownership a good investment, a higher percentage than for the broader U.S. population—71 percent.

Homeownership Statistics, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X	All adults
Own primary residence	78	66
Rent primary residence	22	32
If moving, expect to own*	81	73
If moving, expect to rent*	16	25
See homeownership as good investment	79	71

*Among those likely or very likely to move in the next five years.

Gen Xers Commute to Work or School, and They Commute by Car

Eighty percent of gen Xers commute to school or work three or more days a week, and the vast majority commute by car—92 percent, compared with the U.S. average of 85 percent. About three in five gen Xers (63 percent) report that public transportation is available in their community, slightly lower than the U.S. average of 69 percent.

Transportation Statistics, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X	All adults
Commute to work or school	80	63
Commute by car	92	85
Public transit available	63	69

For Gen X, Single-Family Homes Are the Draw

Seventy-five percent of gen Xers currently live in a single-family home, with 11 percent now living in apartments and 10 percent living in a duplex, townhouse, or rowhouse. What's more, 87 percent of gen X movers expect to move into a single-family home—a much higher percentage than those who are currently in one (75 percent).

Current and Expected Housing Type, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen X, current	Gen X, expected*	All adults, current	All adults, expected*
Single-family home	75	87	66	67
Apartment	11	6	18	15
Duplex, townhouse, or rowhouse	10	4	11	14

* Among those likely or very likely to move in the next five years.

Gen X Has Mixed Feelings about Mixed Use

When it comes to the kind of communities gen X prefers, places featuring attributes associated with compact development appeal to about half the generation. Although gen X's preferences are less urban than those of gen Y and baby boomers, half of gen Xers prefer being close to a mix of shops, restaurants, and offices, and more than 53 percent prefer communities with a mix of incomes.

Community Attribute Preferences, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage naming listed attribute

	Gen X	All adults
Shorter commute/smaller home	54	61
Close to mix of shops, restaurants, and offices	50	53
Mix of incomes	53	52
Public transportation options	45	51
Mix of homes	47	48
<i>Percentage choosing three or more compact development attributes</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>54</i>

Gen X Cares Most about Safety, Schools, and Space

When asked to indicate how they view the importance of certain community characteristics, 97 percent of gen Xers say safety is paramount. Schools are next on their list. Space between neighbors is also a key consideration, with 79 percent of gen Xers ranking such space high in importance, compared with 72 percent of the U.S. population overall.

Community Characteristic Importance Rankings, Gen X versus All Adults

Percentage ranking each characteristic 6 or higher in importance on a scale of 1 to 10

	Gen X	All adults
Neighborhood safety	97	92
Quality of local public schools	82	79
Distance to medical care	63	71
Space between neighbors	79	72
Short distance to work or school	71	71
Walkability	67	70
Distance to shopping/entertainment	58	66
Distance to parks/recreational areas	62	64
Distance to family/friends	57	63
Convenience of public transportation	45	52



Focus on Generation Y

What does generation Y desire when it comes to housing, transportation, and community choices? This fact sheet shares key findings from “America in 2013” about gen Y.

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Generation Y Is America’s Most Diverse Generation

Generation Y, also known as the millennial generation, is the youngest group of adults surveyed as part of “America in 2013.” Gen Y is composed of people born between 1979 and 1995, who are now between the ages of 18 and 34. There are 72 million members of gen Y, a number that continues to grow as immigrants in this age cohort enter the United States.¹

Gen Y stands out as the most urban, multicultural, and transient generation in America today. Forty percent of generation Y is Latino or African American. Compared with the U.S. population as a whole, gen Y has comparatively low levels of education and income—a testament to their relative youth, as well as to the fact that they are just starting their careers amid a challenging job market.

Ethnicity, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen Y	All adults
White	51	69
Latino	18	13
African American	22	12

Household Income, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen Y	All adults
Under \$25,000	30	21
\$25,000–\$50,000	31	25
\$50,000–\$75,000	12	14
Over \$75,000	18	28

Education Level, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen Y	All adults
High school or less	49	40
Some college	34	31
College	11	18
Postgraduate	5	10

Gen Y Is Less Satisfied Than the U.S. Population as a Whole, But Thinks Life Is Getting Better

Gen Yers' satisfaction with the quality of life in their community lags that of the overall U.S. population: whereas 82 percent of gen Yers say they are very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of life in their community, 87 percent of the U.S. population as a whole says this. For gen Y, there is room for improvement.

Gen Y is the least satisfied of all the generations with the range of housing options available (25 percent say they are dissatisfied) and with the quality and quantity of job and career opportunities in their community (49 percent express dissatisfaction).

However, gen Yers are optimistic. About 21 percent of gen Yers say life in their community is getting better, compared with 19 percent of Americans overall; 16 percent say it is getting worse, compared with 17 percent of the U.S. population overall.

Satisfaction with Community's Quality of Life, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage	Gen Y	All adults
Very satisfied	40	49
Somewhat satisfied	42	38
Somewhat dissatisfied	9	7
Very dissatisfied	7	5

Impression of Trend of Quality of Life in the Community, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage	Gen Y	All adults
Better	21	19
Worse	16	17
Same	62	63

Gen Yers Can Be Found in Every Community Type, But Many Are Drawn to Urban Living

Gen Yers are relatively evenly distributed across all community types: about 30 percent of gen Yers live in a small town, 17 percent in the suburbs, and another 39 percent are in a medium-sized or big city.ⁱⁱ

For gen Y, the appeal of urban living is strong. Gen Yers are more likely than the U.S. population overall to say that if they could live anywhere in the next five years, they would live in a medium-sized or big city. Forty percent of gen Yers express that preference, compared with only about 28 percent of the U.S. population as a whole.

Current and Preferred Community Type, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage	Gen Y, current	Gen Y, preferred	All adults, current	All adults, preferred
Rural	12	20	15	24
Small town	30	19	32	26
Suburbs	17	17	21	17
Medium-sized city	21	20	17	16
Big city	18	20	14	12

Generation Y Is on the Move

Gen Y is a generation on the move: 53 percent of gen Yers say they have moved recently, and 63 percent say they expect to move in the next five years. These numbers are much higher than for the U.S. population overall, and specifically for baby boomers, 31 percent of whom say they expect to move in the next five years, and gen Xers, 41 percent of whom expect to move.

Moving Statistics, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage	Gen Y	All adults
Moved in past five years	53	32
Likely to move in next five years	63	42

Gen Y Is a Generation of Renters

Generation Y is a generation of renters: 54 percent of gen Yers currently rent. Of note: only 31 percent of gen-Y movers say they expect to own their new home—perhaps an acknowledgment of a difficult job market.

Despite this generation's limited experience with owning a home, 72 percent of gen Yers say homeownership is a good investment.

Homeownership Statistics, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage	Gen Y	All adults
Own primary residence	40	66
Rent primary residence	54	32
If moving, expect to own*	31	73
If moving, expect to rent*	69	25
See homeownership as good investment	72	71

* Among those likely or very likely to move in the next five years.

Gen Y Uses Public Transit

About 86 percent of gen Yers commute to work or school three or more days a week. Eighty-one percent reports having access to public transportation, a higher percentage than for the U.S. population as a whole, of which 69 percent says it has access to transit. Though the vast majority of gen Yers commute by car, many take advantage of public transit or other options: the percentage of gen Yers commuting by automobile is lower than for the U.S. population overall.

Transportation Statistics, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage	Gen Y	All adults
Commute to work or school	86	63
Commute by car	77	85
Public transit available	81	69

For Gen Y, the Desire for a Single-Family Home Is Strong

Although only 49 percent of gen Yers currently live in a single-family home, 60 percent of those who expect to move in the next five years say they want to move into one. Still, 39 percent of the gen Yers expecting to move think they will end up in an apartment or duplex, townhouse, or rowhouse, higher than the U.S. average of 29 percent.

Current and Expected Housing Type, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage

	Gen Y, Current	Gen Y, Expected*	All adults, Current	All adults, Expected*
Single-family home	49	60	66	67
Apartment	31	21	18	15
Duplex, townhouse, or rowhouse	15	17	11	14

*Among those likely or very likely to move in the next five years.

Gen Y's Preferences Tend to Be More Urban Than Those of the U.S. Population Overall

When it comes to community attributes, members of gen Y express preferences that skew more urban than those of the country as a whole. Fifty-nine percent of gen Yers like communities with a mix of housing types, compared with 48 percent of the U.S. population overall; 62 percent want to be in community with a mix of shops, restaurants, and offices, compared with 61 percent of the U.S. population overall; and 55 percent want public transportation options, compared with an overall U.S. figure of 51 percent.

Of note: there is one area where gen Y lags the overall U.S. population: only 54 percent of gen Yers would give up a larger home if it meant a shorter commute, compared with 61 percent of the U.S. population overall. Perhaps gen Y has not yet experienced the agony of a long commute.

Community Attribute Preferences, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage naming listed attribute

	Gen Y	All adults
Shorter commute/smaller home	54	61
Close to mix of shops, restaurants, and offices	62	53
Mix of incomes	52	52
Public transportation options	55	51
Mix of homes	59	48
<i>Percentage choosing three or more compact development attributes</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>54</i>

Gen Y Values Proximity, Walkability

When asked to indicate how they view the importance of certain community characteristics, gen Yers respond with answers similar to those of the broader population in some areas. As is the case for the country overall, safety and schools top the list of considerations for gen Y. In fact, local public schools are more important to gen Y than to any other generation.

However, gen Y tends to place more importance on being a short distance from work or school and on walkability than does the U.S. population overall. Gen Y ranks other proximity factors—being close to parks and recreational areas, to shopping and entertainment, and to family and friends—high in importance as well.ⁱⁱⁱ Gen Y also places high importance on public transportation.

Gen Y also walks the walks. Like baby boomers, gen Yers walk more than the other generations. Nearly one in four people in generation Y (23 percent) reports walking several blocks to a destination nearly every day.

Community Characteristic Importance Rankings, Gen Y versus All Adults

Percentage ranking each characteristic 6 or higher in importance on a scale of 1 to 10

	Gen Y	All adults
Neighborhood safety	88	92
Quality of local public schools	87	79
Distance to medical care	73	71
Space between neighbors	69	72
Short distance to work or school	82	71
Walkability	76	70
Distance to shopping/entertainment	71	66
Distance to parks/recreational areas	68	64
Distance to family/friends	69	63
Convenience of public transportation	57	52

ⁱ M. Leanne Lachman and Deborah L. Brett, *Generation Y: America's New Housing Wave* (Washington, D.C.: ULI, 2011), 2.

ⁱⁱ *Generation Y: Shopping and Entertainment in the Digital Age* also found that 39 percent of gen Yers characterize themselves as a city person. M. Leanne Lachman and Deborah L. Brett, *Generation Y: Shopping and Entertainment in the Digital Age* (Washington, D.C.: ULI, 2013), 3.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Generation Y: America's New Housing Wave* also found that generation Y ranks distance to family and friends high in importance among community features, along with proximity to work. The authors note that gen Yers desire to balance work and life through their community choices. Lachman and Brett, *Generation Y: America's New Housing Wave*, 13.