

# America in 2013

Focus on Transportation



**Urban Land  
Institute**

Infrastructure Initiative



**Urban Land  
Institute**

Terwilliger Center for Housing

# Table of Contents

## About Us

## Focus on Transportation

**Focus on Transportation Satisfaction**

**Focus on Transportation Preferences**

**Focus on Transportation Habits**

**Focus on Commuting**

**Focus on Public Transportation**

# 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](http://www.uli.org/communitysurvey).



# Focus on Transportation Satisfaction

How satisfied are Americans with their transportation system? This fact sheet shares key findings about transportation satisfaction from “America in 2013.”

“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.

## Americans Are Generally Satisfied with Transportation Options; Baby Boomers and Rural Dwellers Are Least Satisfied

Seventy-two percent of Americans are satisfied with the range of transportation options available in their community. Baby boomers report the least satisfaction, with only 68 percent saying they are satisfied and 29 percent indicating dissatisfaction.

### Satisfaction with Range of Transportation Options Available, by Generation

Percentage

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
<b>All adults</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>25</b>
Gen Y	73	25
Gen X	73	24
Baby boomers	68	29
War babies/silent generation	72	17

Evaluated by community type, the survey results show rural residents are the least satisfied with the transportation options available, with 31 percent expressing dissatisfaction. In fact, satisfaction with transportation options increases by size of community, with 79 percent of big-city dwellers indicating they are satisfied with their transportation options and only 18 percent expressing dissatisfaction.

### Satisfaction with Range of Transportation Options Available, by Size of Community

Percentage

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Rural	65	31
Small town	70	27
Suburbs	71	23
Medium-sized city	77	20
Big city	79	18

## Americans Are Generally Satisfied with Sidewalks

Most Americans are satisfied with the quality of the sidewalks in their community. Older Americans are most satisfied, and gen Yers are least satisfied.

### Satisfaction with Sidewalks, by Generation

Percentage	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
<b>All adults</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>23</b>
Gen Y	70	25
Gen X	72	21
Baby boomers	71	23
War babies/silent generation	75	19

## If They Have Access to It, Americans Are Satisfied with Public Transportation

But how satisfied are Americans with public transportation? Among those who have access to transit, satisfaction is high. Seventy-five percent of Americans are satisfied with the transit they have, although satisfaction levels are somewhat lower among older Americans.

### Satisfaction with Public Transit among Those with Access, by Generation

Percentage	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
<b>All adults</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>17</b>
Gen Y	75	19
Gen X	76	19
Baby boomers	76	17
War babies/silent generation	72	9

## More Than Half of Americans without Transit Are Dissatisfied with That Condition

Fifty-one percent of Americans who do not have access to transit are dissatisfied with that situation. That is, among the 30 percent of Americans who do not have access to transit, over half wish they did. Dissatisfaction is strongest among baby boomers, followed by gen Yers.

### Satisfaction with Availability of Public Transit among Those without Access, by Generation

Percentage	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
<b>All adults</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>51</b>
Gen Y	48	48
Gen X	39	54
Baby boomers	38	57
War babies/silent generation	52	36



# Focus on Transportation Preferences

What do Americans want from their transportation system? This fact sheet shares key findings about transportation preferences from “America in 2013.”

“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.

## When Choosing a New Community, Most Americans Think Walkability and Transit Are Important

“America in 2013” asked respondents to rank, on a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, how important various community attributes would be to them if they were moving in the next five years. Overwhelmingly, Americans want walkable communities. A preference for walkability is especially strong among gen Yers, 76 percent of whom give walkability a score of 6 or higher.

Respondents representing over half of Americans, 52 percent, give public transportation a score of 6 or higher. Convenient public transportation is least likely to be important to members of gen X, but is important to many gen Yers, as well as to war babies/members of the silent generation.

### Importance Rankings for Walkability and Public Transportation, by Generation

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

	Walkability	Convenient public transportation
<b>All adults</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>52</b>
Gen Y	76	57
Gen X	67	45
Baby boomers	67	50
War babies/silent generation	69	56

## Public Transit Is a Meaningful Community Attribute to a Majority of Americans

“America in 2013” also asked respondents to indicate if they preferred public transportation, or if it did not matter. Strength of preference for public transportation varies across the generations, and is strongest among gen Yers. However, even among the group with the weakest preference for transit, war babies/the silent generation, nearly half, 48 percent, would prefer to live in a community that has public transit they can use.

### Preferences for Public Transportation, by Generation

Percentage

	Prefer public transportation options	Public transportation options do not matter
<b>All adults</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>
Gen Y	55	45
Gen X	45	55
Baby boomers	52	48
War babies/silent generation	48	52

## Americans Want to Be Close to It All

Americans want to be close to work, school, and other destinations like shopping and entertainment, as well as family and friends. Gen Yers, especially, place high importance on all aspects of proximity. For older Americans, being close to medical care is a particularly important consideration.

### Importance Rankings for Distance, by Generation

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

	Work or school	Medical care	Shopping or entertainment	Family or friends
<b>All adults</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>63</b>
Gen Y	82	73	71	69
Gen X	71	63	58	57
Baby boomers	67	72	67	60
War babies/silent generation	57	78	69	66

# America in 2013

A ULI Survey of Views on  
Housing, Transportation,  
and Community

## Focus on Transportation Habits

How do Americans use their transportation systems? This fact sheet shares key findings from “America in 2013” about transportation by mode.

“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.

### Americans Use a Variety of Transportation Modes to Get Around

Americans are frequent drivers, but they also regularly walk, bike, and use transit to get to their destinations. While 91 percent of Americans go somewhere by motor vehicle at least once a week, 44 percent walk to a destination once a week or more. That makes walking the most important mode of transportation after driving. Eleven percent of Americans take public transit as frequently as once a week. Though few Americans are daily bike riders, 12 percent report biking weekly, and another 12 percent use a bicycle at least once a month.

#### Frequency of Use, by Transportation Mode

Percentage

	Nearly every day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month or never
Go somewhere by car, truck, or motorcycle	77	14	3	5
Take public transit	6	5	7	80
Walk several blocks or more to a destination	22	22	10	46
Ride a bicycle	2	12	12	74

Visit [www.uli.org/communitysurvey](http://www.uli.org/communitysurvey) to learn more about “America in 2013.”



### Most Americans Drive Daily, Especially Gen Xers

Generation X is the most likely to drive on a daily basis, and older Americans are the least likely to do so. Eight percent of the oldest Americans report that they do not drive much at all, and 28 percent say they drive about monthly. About 3 percent of gen Xers say they do not drive much either.

#### Frequency of Travel by Car, Truck, or Motorcycle, by Generation

Percentage

	Nearly every day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month or never
<b>All adults</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
Gen Y	79	11	4	7
Gen X	89	6	2	3
Baby boomers	78	16	2	4
War babies/silent generation	57	28	28	8

### Next Comes Walking

Second only to driving, walking to a destination is a frequent habit of Americans, with 44 percent reporting that they walk to a destination daily or weekly. However, 46 percent report that they never walk several blocks or more to a destination.

The percentages of people walking to a destination at least weekly is relatively consistent across the generations, with 47 percent of gen Yers saying they do so, along with 46 percent of gen Xers and 43 percent of baby boomers. Only the oldest Americans—war babies and members of the silent generation—tend to be less active than that.

#### Frequency of Walking Several Blocks or More to a Destination, by Generation

Percentage

	Nearly every day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month or never
<b>All adults</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>46</b>
Gen Y	23	24	11	43
Gen X	19	27	11	42
Baby boomers	24	19	11	46
War babies/silent generation	17	14	7	61

### Then Comes Transit, Which Many Americans Use Frequently

Eleven percent of those surveyed report using transit on a daily or weekly basis. Transit use is especially high among gen Yers, 29 percent of whom report using transit at least once a month. Older Americans are the least frequent users of public transit.

#### Frequency of Transit Use, by Generation

Percentage

	Nearly every day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month or never
<b>All adults</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>80</b>
Gen Y	10	10	9	71
Gen X	4	3	9	84
Baby boomers	6	4	5	83
War babies/silent generation	2	2	8	87

### Mode Use Varies by Type and Size of Community

How people get around correlates with the nature of the community in which they live. Residents of big cities employ more modes of transportation more frequently, taking transit and walking more than people living in less-populated places. Rural residents and suburbanites drive the most. Of note: rural residents are frequent bikers, with 2 percent biking daily and another 17 percent biking at least once a week. People who live in medium-sized cities also embrace several transportation modes and are both frequent transit users and walkers.

Public transit use is most common among big-city residents, 34 percent of whom use transit nearly every day or at least once a week—with 19 percent using it almost daily.

#### Frequency of Mode Use, by Size of Community

Percentage using each mode nearly every day or at least once a week

	Drive	Take transit	Walk	Bike
Rural	96	2	31	19
Small town	90	8	42	12
Suburbs	96	8	37	15
Medium-sized city	94	14	49	12
Big city	79	34	59	15

# America in 2013

A ULI Survey of Views on  
Housing, Transportation,  
and Community

## Focus on Commuting

How do Americans commute, and how does this behavior differ by generation and by location? This fact sheet shares key findings from “America in 2013” about commuting behavior.

“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.

### Two-Thirds of Americans Commute to Work or School

Sixty-three percent of Americans commute to work or school three or more days a week. Members of generation Y are the most likely to commute to work or school, followed by gen Xers and then baby boomers. About 8 percent of older Americans commute three days a week or more. The percentages of those who report commuting vary by gender—71 percent of men and 57 percent of women.

#### Commuting, by Generation

Percentage commuting three or more days per week

<b>All adults</b>	<b>63</b>
Gen Y	86
Gen X	80
Baby boomers	58
War babies/silent generation	8

### Transit Is Heavily Used for Commuting by Gen Y, Big-City Dwellers, and People with Low Incomes

The survey found that 85 percent of Americans commute by car on most days. Eleven percent of the population usually commutes by public transit, and about 5 percent walks or bikes. Eighteen percent of gen Yers take transit, making them the most likely of all the generations to do so. Nine percent of baby boomers are also regular transit users.

#### Commuting Behavior, by Generation

Percentage using particular transportation mode

	<b>Car</b>	<b>Public transit</b>	<b>Walk or bike</b>
<b>All adults</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>
Gen Y	77	18	7
Gen X	92	4	5
Baby boomers	90	9	2
War babies/silent generation	91	3	6

Visit [www.uli.org/communitysurvey](http://www.uli.org/communitysurvey) to learn more about “America in 2013.”

By community size, 32 percent of big-city residents say they commute by transit most of the time, whereas 10 percent of suburban dwellers do so. Big-city residents are also more likely to walk or bike to work.

### Commuting Behavior, by Community Size

Percentage using particular transportation mode	Car	Public transit	Walk or bike
Rural	95	3	1
Small town	89	8	3
Suburbs	90	10	3
Medium-sized city	91	7	9
Big city	57	32	11

The likelihood of commuting by automobile increases with income, with 94 percent of Americans who make \$75,000 or more reporting that they mostly commute by car. Lower-income Americans are most likely to use public transit to commute (24 percent), and to walk or bike to work or school (15 percent).

### Commuting Behavior, by Household Income

Percentage using particular transportation mode	Car	Public transit	Walk or bike
Under \$25,000	68	24	15
\$25,000–\$50,000	83	15	3
\$50,000–\$75,000	92	3	4
Over \$75,000	94	4	2

### Public Transit Users Have the Longest Commute

More than one-third of Americans, 36 percent, have a commute that is over half an hour. Another 36 percent spend 15 to 29 minutes per day on their commute, and a lucky 27 percent have a commute that takes less than a quarter of an hour.

Public transit users have the longest commute among all commuters, with over half having a commute of 45 minutes or more. Forty-two percent of bikers or walkers have commutes that take less than 15 minutes.

### Length of Commute, by Commute Type

Percentage reporting respective commute time	0–14 minutes	15–29 minutes	30–44 minutes	45-plus minutes
<b>All commutes</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
Public transit	13	16	16	51
Car	28	38	20	4
Biking/walking	42	33	21	4

### More Than Half Would Accept a Smaller Home in Exchange for a Shorter Commute

Sixty-one percent of Americans say they would prefer a commute shorter than 45 minutes, even if it meant living in a smaller home. The other 39 percent say they would prefer the larger home even if meant a long commute. Baby boomers are especially willing to give up a large home for a short commute: 72 percent prefer that option, higher than for any other generation.

#### Smaller Home/Shorter Commute versus Bigger Home/Longer Commute, by Generation

Percentage preferring listed option

	Smaller home/ shorter commute	Bigger home/ longer commute
<b>All adults</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>39</b>
Gen Y	54	36
Gen X	54	36
Baby boomers	72	28
War babies/silent generation	65	35

# America in 2013

A ULI Survey of Views on  
Housing, Transportation,  
and Community

## Focus on Public Transportation

When it comes to public transportation or transit, what do Americans think and do? This fact sheet shares key findings from “America in 2013” about public transportation.

“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.

### Public Transit Is a Meaningful Community Attribute to a Majority of Americans

The survey asked several questions to illuminate how people feel about public transit. About half of Americans think convenient public transportation is a meaningful community attribute. The strength of that preference varies across the generations and is strongest among members of generation Y. However, even among the group with the weakest preference for transit, war babies/members of the silent generation, nearly half the respondents—48 percent—would prefer to live in a community that has public transit they can use.

#### Preferences for Public Transportation, by Generation

Percentage

	Prefer public transportation options	Public transportation options do not matter
<b>All adults</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>
Gen Y	55	44
Gen X	45	55
Baby boomers	52	48
War babies/silent generation	48	50

### Americans Place a Lot of Importance on Public Transportation

“America in 2013” asked respondents to rank on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how important public transportation would be to them in choosing a community if they were moving. Over half of Americans, 52 percent, give public transportation a score of 6 or higher. Convenient public transportation is least likely to be important to gen Xers, but is important to many gen Yers, as well as to war babies/members of the silent generation.

#### Importance Rankings for Public Transportation, by Generation

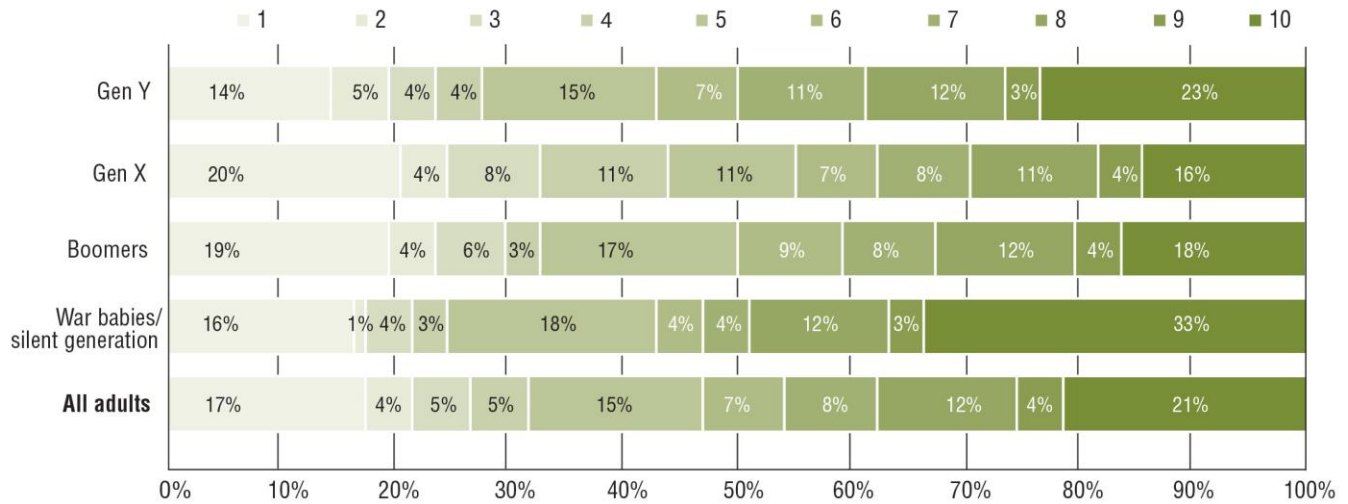
Percentage giving listed ranking on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being highest

	1 to 5	6 to 10
<b>All adults</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>52</b>
Gen Y	42	56
Gen X	54	46
Baby boomers	49	51
War babies/silent generation	42	56

Of note, as shown in the figure below, older Americans indicate the highest strength of preference on this question: 33 percent of war babies/members of the silent generation give public transportation a ranking of 10, more than any other demographic group.

### Detailed Look at Importance Rankings for Public Transportation, by Generation

Percentage giving indicated numerical ranking



### Public Transportation Is Widely Available to Americans, but Access Varies Widely by Size of Community

Most Americans have access to public transit in their community. Gen Yers report the highest level of access and older Americans the lowest.

#### Public Transit Availability, by Generation

Percentage

	Available	Not available
<b>All adults</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>30</b>
Gen Y	81	18
Gen X	63	37
Baby boomers	63	36
War babies/silent generation	65	35

Although transit access is high across the population and generations, rural areas report the lowest level of availability. Most big-city residents have access to transit, and nearly three-quarters of suburban dwellers also report having transit available.

### Public Transit Availability, by Size of Community

Percentage	Available	Not available
Rural	23	76
Small town	66	33
Suburbs	74	25
Medium-sized city	90	10
Big city	95	4

### Americans Generally Are Satisfied with Public Transportation—If They Have It

But how satisfied are Americans with public transportation? Among those who have access to transit, satisfaction levels are high. Overall, 75 percent of Americans say they are satisfied with the transit they have, although satisfaction levels are somewhat lower among older Americans.

### Satisfaction with Public Transit among Those Who Have Access to It, by Generation

Percentage	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
<b>All adults</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>17</b>
Gen Y	75	19
Gen X	76	19
Baby boomers	76	17
War babies/silent generation	72	9

### More Than Half of Americans without Transit Are Dissatisfied with That Condition

However, among those without access to transit, 51 percent are dissatisfied with that situation. That is, of the 30 percent of Americans who do not have access to transit, over half wish they did. Dissatisfaction is strongest among baby boomers, followed by gen Xers.

### Satisfaction with Availability of Public Transit among Those without Access, by Generation

Percentage	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
<b>All adults</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>51</b>
Gen Y	48	48
Gen X	39	54
Baby boomers	38	57
War babies/silent generation	52	36



### Many Americans—Especially Those in Cities—Report Being Frequent Users of Public Transit

Although driving is the dominant mode of transportation in the United States, 11 percent of Americans use transit on a daily or weekly basis. Transit use is especially high among gen Yers, 29 percent of whom report using transit at least once a month or more. Older Americans are the least frequent users of public transit.

#### Frequency of Transit Use, by Generation

Percentage

	Nearly every day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a week, or never
<b>All adults</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>80</b>
Gen Y	10	10	9	71
Gen X	4	3	9	84
Baby boomers	6	4	5	83
War babies/silent generation	2	2	8	87

Use of public transit is most common among those living in big cities, 19 percent of whom report using transit daily, with another 15 percent using transit once a week.

#### Frequency of Transit Use, by Size of Community

Percentage

	Nearly every day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a week, or never
Rural	2	—	3	94
Small town	4	4	8	84
Suburbs	6	2	8	83
Medium-sized city	6	8	9	76
Big city	19	15	9	57