

Cheated by Car Dependence: Drivers and Nondrivers in the United States

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The Climate and Community Institute (CCI) is a progressive climate and economy think tank. We work with movements and progressive policy makers to pass new policy, improve implementation, shift narratives, and deepen coalitions.



America Walks is leading the way in advancing walkable, equitable, connected, and accessible places in every community across the U.S.



Nondrivers Alliance is a grassroots organizing project that taps into the power, expertise and passion of nondrivers to move our communities beyond car dependency.

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Introduction

The US-Israel war on Iran and the resulting global oil shortage sent gas prices soaring and wreaked havoc in economies from Asia to Europe, reminding everyone—from individual drivers to national leaders—of the vulnerability of a gas-fueled economy.¹ People across the United States are struggling to make rent, pay for utilities and groceries, and cover transportation expenses including gas, insurance, and repairs for cars. When it comes to the role of transportation in this affordability crisis, however, the media's and policymakers' narrow focus on gas prices is only part of the story. For decades, transportation planning in the United States has largely ignored people who do not drive cars or would rather not drive if they had other choices.

While a majority of adults drive, most of them wish that they had other options. Meanwhile, nondrivers make up more than a third of the total population²—and their lack of transportation options can severely impact their cost of living. Any policy platform that aims to reduce cost of living and improve quality of life for the average US resident must prioritize programs and infrastructure that serve nondrivers, which will reduce living expenses and deliver benefits for nondrivers and drivers alike. This will look different in urban, rural, and suburban settings, but there are transportation solutions available to every type of community.

Drivers struggle with costs and want a way out of car reliance

In the United States, the average price of gas peaked around \$4.60 in May 2026, and some experts estimate that US drivers will not see

¹ Lee Yin Shan, "Oil Market at 'Tank Bottoms' in Asia, and Europe Isn't Far Behind, Warns Market Veteran Jeff Currie," CNBC, May 25, 2026, <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/05/25/oil-prices-iran-war-carlyle-currie.html>.

² Ali Lehman and Samantha Hannington, "Who Doesn't Have a Car?," Natural Resources Defense Council, October 1, 2025, <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/who-doesnt-have-car>.

gas prices dip below \$3.00 for another six years.³ If there is one thing that is clear about pain at the pump, it is that it reverberates. Approximately three in four adults in the US rely on cars as their main way to get around—to work, to school, to the grocery store, to medical appointments. Many more children also depend on their family’s car access to meet needs and reach opportunities. Moreover, car-reliance touches people across the spectrum of race, geography, and income status. Therefore, a spike in oil prices means a squeeze to many household budgets. And those unable to make necessary adjustments may risk their ability to get to work, putting them in deeper financial precarity.

More than 3 in 4 Americans own or share a personal car for their primary transportation

How much would you say you drive or ride in a car?

- I own or share a car and a car is my primary mode of transportation
- I own or share a car but do not use a car as my primary mode of transportation
- I do not own or share a car but use ridesharing services or cabs as my primary mode of transportation
- I do not own or share a car and do not use cars as my primary mode of transportation
- Not sure



Source: Data for Progress, Aug. 15–18, 2025, survey of US adults, N=1,419; subgroup Ns vary. Note that percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

³ US Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Average Price: Gasoline, Unleaded Regular (Cost per Gallon/3.785 Liters) in U.S. City Average [APU000074714]," retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, updated August 12, 2026, accessed August 25, 2026, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/APU000074714>; Sean James, "CNN Expert Predicts Gas Prices Won't Drop Below \$3 in the Next 6 Years," Mediaite, republished on Yahoo! Finance, May 26, 2026, <https://finance.yahoo.com/sectors/energy/articles/cnn-expert-predicts-gas-prices-190701389.html>.

Stories from the street: financial impacts of car ownership⁴

“ I don’t see myself owning a car again. It’s too expensive and honestly too stressful. Having a car meant living paycheck to paycheck. Now I spend maybe \$140 to \$180 a month on passes, and I can actually save money.

Former car owner in Dallas, Texas

“ Having a car was the most expensive thing [...] about \$2,000 a year on just car insurance alone. Now I spend about \$80 a month on transit. That is just night and day in terms of how much I’m paying.

Former car owner in Washington, D.C.

“ Now that I have a bike, I probably spend about \$100 a month on maintenance. Even when I dropped \$1,400 on a pedal-assist bike, that’s still far cheaper than gas, insurance, and car ownership. [...] Because I don’t have the albatross of car ownership weighing me down financially, I can go to community events, grab dinner with friends, and be a regular at a coffee shop. That freedom matters.

Former car owner in Spartanburg, South Carolina

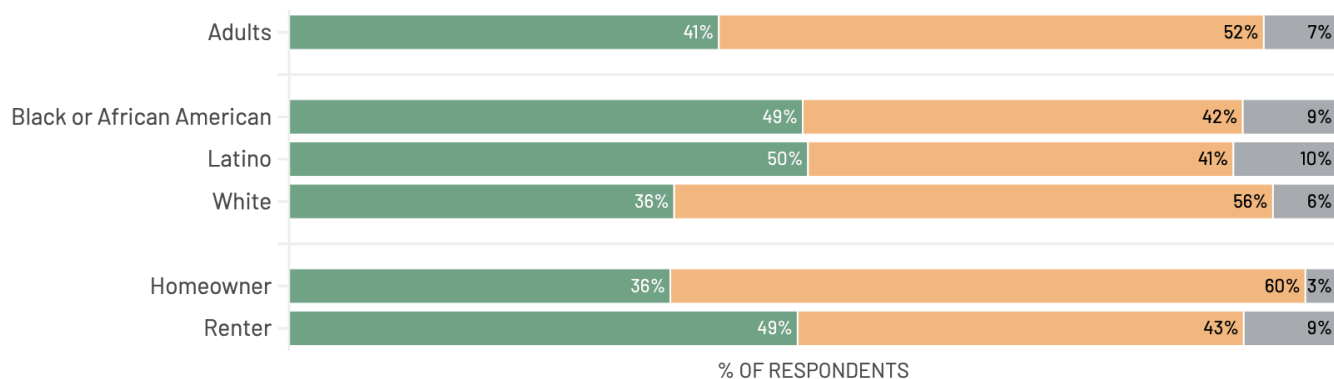
Even before the most recent gas price spikes, about two in five adults had a hard time affording transportation and regularly had to choose between paying for transportation or paying for other basic needs. National polling from August 2025 conducted by Climate and Community Institute (CCI) and Data for Progress found that **41 percent of adults report that they sometimes, often, or always have to significantly adjust their spending in other areas to afford transportation.** Furthermore, **38 percent find it “somewhat” or “very” difficult to cover unexpected transportation costs.**

⁴ All “stories from the street” quotes here and below are sourced from interviews conducted by Ruth Rosas, as part of the University of California, Davis Environmental Justice Leaders Program led by the UCD Feminist Research Institute & UCD Institute of Transportation Studies.

Around 2 in 5 Americans say that they sometimes, often, or always have to make significant adjustments to their spending to afford transportation

How often do you have to significantly adjust your spending in other areas to afford transportation (e.g., fuel, transit fares, car payments, car insurance, maintenance or repairs, or rideshare expenses)?

■ At least sometimes ■ Rarely or never ■ Do not know/I am not responsible for paying this

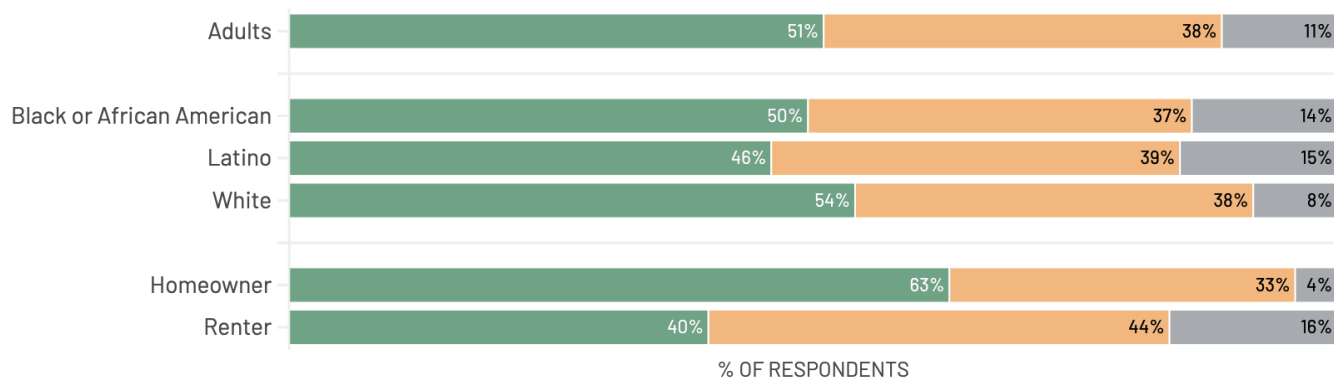


Source: Data for Progress, Aug. 15–18, 2025, survey of US adults, N=1,419; subgroup Ns vary. “At least sometimes” combines sometimes/often/always; “Rarely or never” combines rarely/never. Note that percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Unexpected transportation costs are difficult to cover for nearly 2 in 5 Americans

When unexpected transportation costs arise (e.g., car repairs, transit fare increases, insurance rate increases), how easy or difficult is it for your household to cover them?

■ Easy ■ Difficult ■ Do not know/I am not responsible for paying this



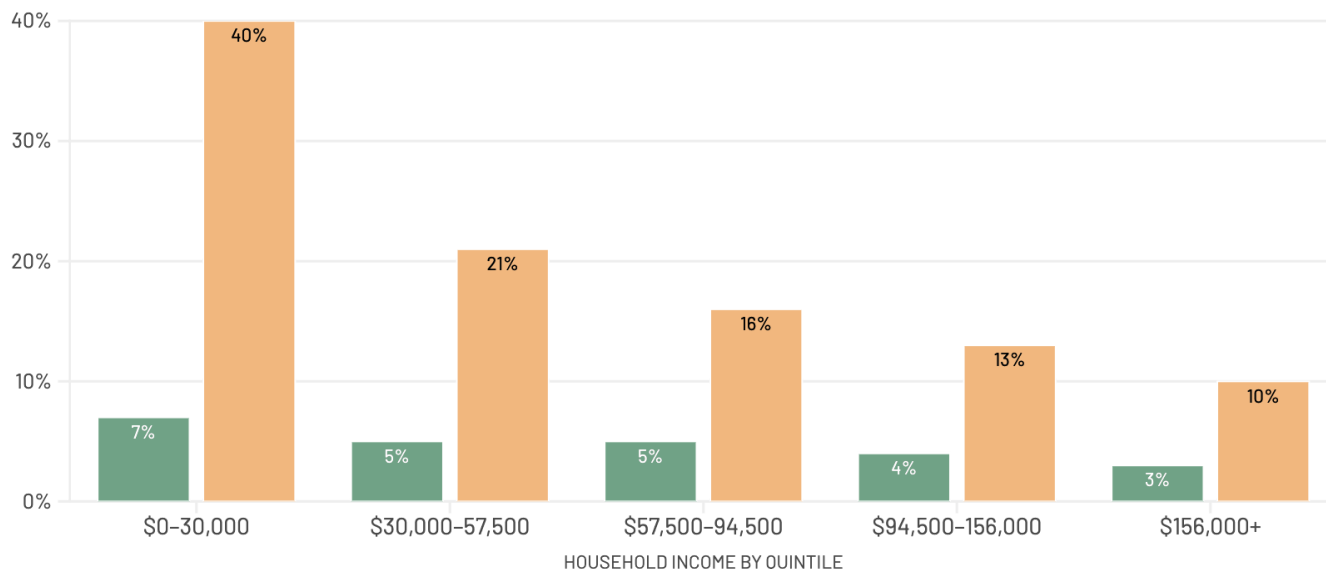
Source: Data for Progress, Aug. 15–18, 2025, survey of US adults, N=1,419, subgroup Ns vary. “Easy” combines very/somewhat easy; “Difficult” combines somewhat/very difficult. Note that percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Car-reliant people and infrequent car users alike report this difficulty fairly equally. However, people who depend on cars for their transportation are, on average, spending \$1,000 more per month than those who rely on public transportation.⁵ While transportation is a burden for drivers and nondrivers alike, it does not affect household economies on a simple axis. For the lowest-income drivers, the monetary costs of fuel, insurance, and repairs represent 40 percent of total household income.

The lowest-income households with cars pay 40 percent of their income toward transportation, versus just 7 percent for the lowest-income households without cars

■ Households without a car ■ Households with a car

TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES AS A % OF INCOME (2024)



Source: Climate and Community Institute, using data from the US Department of Transportation (DOT) Bureau of Transportation Statistics.⁶

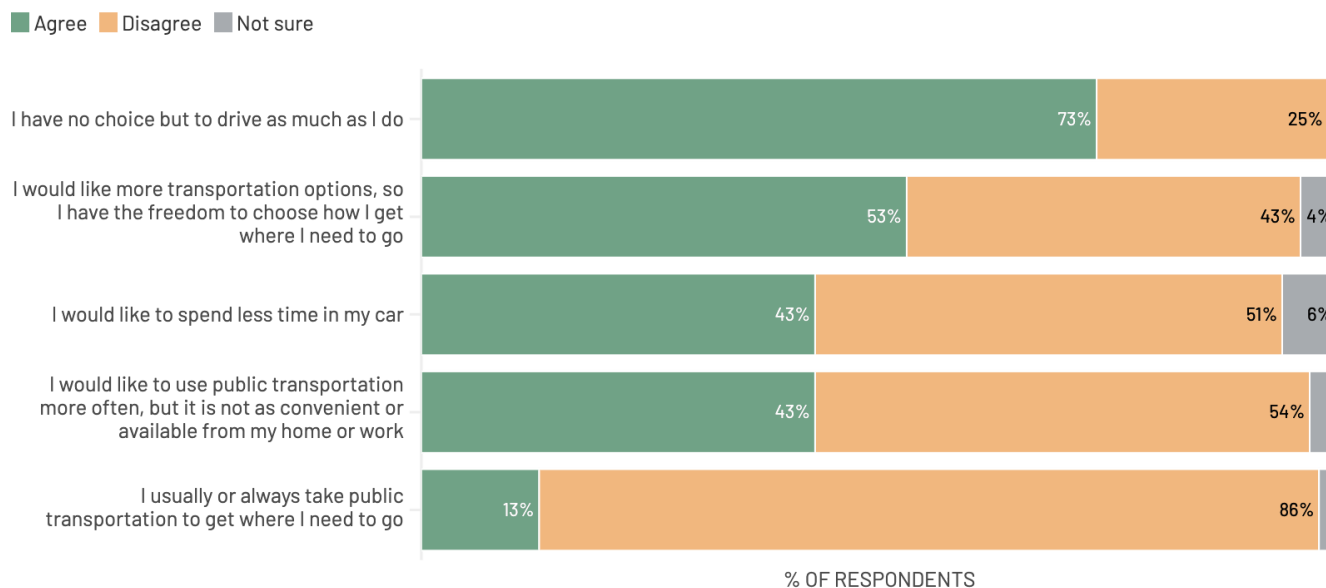
⁵ According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2024 data shows that households that owned or leased a vehicle spent on average \$14,750 annually on transportation while households that did not own or lease a vehicle spent on average \$2,165. US Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, "Household Spending on Transportation: Average Household Spending," Transportation Economic Trends, accessed July 16, 2026, <https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/Transportation-Economic-Trends-Transportation-Spen/ida7-k95k/>.

⁶ US Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, "Transportation Cost Burden: Transportation Spending by Income Quintile and Vehicles Available," Transportation Economic Trends, accessed August 11, 2026, <https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/v67s-vigd#spending-by-households-with-a-vehicle-vs.-no-vehicle>.

Yet, even higher-income drivers, who spend a lower proportion of their income on transportation, may still spend a great deal of their time getting from point A to point B. Meanwhile, nondrivers do not pay nearly as much in direct transportation costs, but tend to pay even more in time and lost opportunities.⁷

National polling found that **a whopping 73 percent of drivers agree that they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.** And **a majority of drivers (53 percent)** would like to have more transportation options. In other words, **most car-reliant people in the United States feel trapped into driving a car.** Notably, more than two in five regular drivers would like to spend less time in their car (43 percent) and use public transportation more often if it were convenient and available to use (43 percent).

Car owners feel stuck and would like more options to get around



Source: Data for Progress, Aug. 15–18, 2025, survey of US adults, N=1,419. Adults who own/share a car for primary transportation (weighted n=1,096). “Agree” is strongly/somewhat agree; “Disagree” is somewhat/strongly disagree. Note that percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

⁷ Karthik Balasubramanian and Kai Hall, “The District’s Transportation System Taxes Everyone’s Time,” Greater Greater Washington, May 20, 2025, <https://gqwash.org/view/99532/dc-transportation-time-tax>.

Stories from the street: household impacts of unreliable transportation

“ Twice a month my sister would come and get me for groceries, but vegetables only last three or four days. I had to eat a lot of canned foods and things, which was not great. [. . .] The bus here only comes once an hour. Going to the doctor can turn into a two- to three-hour ordeal, just to get there.

Nondriver in Bowling Green, Kentucky

“ I’ve tried to look for places within a half-mile walking distance of transit, but now I’ve had to do even more research—can I get to a grocery store, can I get to a doctor? That’s what determines where I can live.

Nondriver in Baltimore, Maryland

Nondrivers are geographically diverse and need better transportation options

Nearly 40 percent of driving-age US residents live in car-lite households.

Despite the high rate of car dependency in the United States, a huge number of US residents do not have access to a car. Recent calculations by the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) estimate that 36 percent of people do not or cannot rely on a personal vehicle to meet their travel needs.⁸ Climate and Community Institute’s analysis of American Community Survey microdata shows that many households in the US are car-free or “car-lite” (less than one car per driving-age person).⁹ Nearly 40 percent of driving-age people, defined as those 15 or over, live in households with fewer cars than driving-age people. This represents a significant population that may lack reliable access to transportation, and many of these households are located in places beyond the urban areas that are better served by transit.

⁸ This statistic is for people over the age of ten. NRDC used 10 years as an age when young people start to have more independent travel needs. For youth 10 and over who “cannot rely on a personal vehicle to meet their travel needs,” this generally means there is not a family car to drive them places, so they would need to rely on other transportation modes in the same way that the adult family members in their household would. Ali Lehman and Samantha Hannington, “Who Doesn’t Have a Car?,” Natural Resources Defense Council, October 1, 2025, <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/who-doesnt-have-car>.

⁹ Data was calculated from the 2016–2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata, using an extract from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). See Appendix for more detailed methodology discussion.

Across the country—in rural communities, suburbs, and cities—there are millions of adults who cannot drive or do not have access to a vehicle. These nondrivers include, among others, people who have disabilities that make driving unsafe or unfeasible, teenagers who have not obtained a license or do not have access to a car, grandparents who can no longer drive safely due to physical limitations, and working people who cannot afford the high cost of car ownership. On top of the many driving-age people who cannot drive, there are more who prefer not to drive as a financial or quality-of-life decision. There are also many youths who are old enough to have some independence but lack reliable or safe ways to get around, and these populations are often overlooked in conversations about transportation policy.

Stories from the street: nondrivers need good options for getting around

“ I have never had a driver’s license. . . . Both my parents are disabled. [. . .] Even if I did get my license, I wasn’t going to be able to afford a reliable car. For families like mine, with disabilities and no income, transportation is more than just getting around—it’s about dignity and being able to participate in daily life without being left behind.

Nondriver in Spartanburg, South Carolina

“ Nondrivers like me, especially people of color, are forced to endure unsafe, unreliable systems that would never be acceptable in wealthier or whiter neighborhoods. [. . .] Sometimes it takes me two hours just to go five miles. That’s not freedom—that’s punishment for not owning a car. [. . .] I spend more time waiting on the bus than I do at my actual destination. That’s time I could be using for work or family.

Nondriver in Baltimore, Maryland

US nationwide statistics ¹⁰	
Average ratio of cars to people in the US	0.73
Number of people in zero-car households	19,210,582
Number of people in households with more adults than cars	117,119,986
Percentage of people living in car-lite households (with more adults than cars)	36 percent
Percentage of people living in households with zero cars	6 percent

Although car-lite and car-free households are more common in cities, many nondrivers can be found in suburban and rural settings across the United States. Not surprisingly, as a general rule more densely populated places tend to have lower rates of car ownership, because higher density generally translates to shorter distances between destinations and more reliable transit access.¹¹ Conversely, people in suburban and rural areas are more likely to rely on cars.

Stories from the street: contrasting experiences in transit-rich and transit-poor communities

“ I live in the uptown neighborhood of Minneapolis [. . .] it’s so highly walkable. I have two grocery stores within a 10-minute walk, lots of bike lanes and transit lanes. This has been a really supportive neighborhood for my transportation needs.

Nondriver in Minneapolis, Minnesota

“ We unfortunately lost our little grocery store that was at the north end of town, that previously I could walk to. [. . .] Now we have to do once-a-week trips to the grocery store and load up. If we’ve forgotten something, it’s hectic to go out again.

Nondriver in Ashburnham, Massachusetts

¹⁰ This data was calculated from the 2016–2021 5-year American Community Survey.

¹¹ Fatemeh Janatabadi, Alireza Ermagun, and David Levinson, “Spatial Patterns of Access-Density Mismatch Reveal Infrastructure Gaps and Strategic Opportunities for New Housing,” *npj Sustainable Mobility and Transport* 3, article 10 (2026), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44333-026-00080-w>.

About 30 percent of residents in rural or low-density communities—more than 37 million people—live in car-lite households.

However, even in these places where it is harder to cope without a personal vehicle, a substantial number of people cannot rely on their own ride to get around. **Nationwide, about 30 percent of people in rural or low-density communities live in car-lite households, or households with fewer cars than driving-age individuals.** This represents over 37 million people, or over 10 percent of the US population. Of those rural or low-density residents, almost 15 million live with a ratio of two adults per car (such as one car shared by two adults, or two cars shared by four adults); 4 million share one car for every four adults; and another 4 million live in zero-car households.

In some cases, rural car ownership rates actually match those of much more densely populated urban and suburban areas. In both the cities and surrounding rural areas in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, for example, more than 45 percent of households are car-lite despite sparse population densities.¹² Similar car ownership numbers play out in rural Appalachian regions of Kentucky and West Virginia¹³ and low-density areas in the inland parts of southern Florida.¹⁴ This may speak to declining age and deep poverty in some rural populations for whom car ownership would be an unbearable cost, which forces people to forgo or curtail car ownership even in rural places that are least served by transit—and where people may desperately need cars to meet their needs. Ten percent of rural, low-income people live in car-free households, while only a sliver (1 percent) of rural households in other income levels are car-free.¹⁵

Regardless of the root cause, this prevalence of car-free and car-lite households nationwide highlights the need for more transportation

¹² Region-specific car-lite percentages come from CCI analysis of the 2016–2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata. Rural areas are defined as Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) having population densities of less than 500 people per square mile using a population-weighted mean. By contrast, some urban PUMAs in the San Francisco Bay Area have this same percentage of car-lite households (45 percent) or fewer in much higher urban densities (over 7,000 residents per square mile.)

¹³ Car-lite household rates in rural Appalachian regions of Kentucky and West Virginia range from 35 to 45 percent, with densities ranging from 49 to 496 people per square mile.

¹⁴ Car-lite household rates in the inland parts of southern Florida range from 39 to 43 percent, with densities ranging from 93 to 534 people per square mile.

¹⁵ CCI analysis of the 2016–2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata. Low-income is here defined as household income below \$42,000. This is roughly the lowest quartile, or just above 150 percent of the federal poverty threshold for a three-person household (the average household size in the US is 2.53).

options, including in rural and suburban areas where car-free individuals typically have fewer options and need even greater relief.

Policy solutions can lower costs and improve people's lives by increasing transportation options for everyone

Clearly, many people in the US experience car dependence as a burden—whether they have a car or not. Decades of influence by the auto and oil industries have contributed to urban planners and policymakers designing communities and funneling transportation dollars primarily to serve people with cars.¹⁶ It should be a no-brainer for policymakers to embrace infrastructure that gives people more affordable options like public transit and walkable streets. Unfortunately, federal legislators are poised to continue the exact opposite. Biden's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) expires on September 30, 2026, which means Congress needs to renegotiate funding for highways, public transit, and inter-city rail projects.¹⁷ Republicans have proposed the BUILD America 250 Act, which threatens to allocate more money to highways and less to transit.¹⁸ In other words, it would mark 250 years of independence with even more car dependence.

For the sake of working people's wallets and quality of life, it is time for the United States to invest in a truly multimodal transportation system that makes it possible for everyone to get around with ease and dignity, on a working-class budget. Luckily, policymakers have

¹⁶ Kevin X. Shen, "The Highway Lobby Spends Millions to Make Sure We Pay Billions," *The Equation* (blog), Union of Concerned Scientists, May 6, 2026, <https://blog.ucs.org/kshen/the-highway-lobby-spends-millions-to-make-sure-we-pay-billions/>; Eli Saveta M. Brandon, "How Automakers Insidiously Shaped Our Cities for Cars," *Fast Company*, September 1, 2022, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90781961/how-automakers-insidiously-shaped-our-cities-for-cars>.

¹⁷ Legis1 Editorial, "Congress Votes on Federal Highway Funding," *Legis1*, June 3, 2026, <https://legis1.com/news/federal-highway-funding-expires-september-2026>.

¹⁸ National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), "BUILD America 250 Proposes More of the Same for Federal Transportation Funding," May 29, 2026, <https://nacto.org/latest/build-america-250-proposes-more-of-the-same-for-federal-transportation-funding/>; Union of Concerned Scientists, "Proposed Surface Transportation Bill Would Harm People, the Environment," news release, May 18, 2026, <https://www.ucs.org/about/news/transportation-bill-would-harm-people-environment>.

the solutions at their fingertips. The government can invest in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods that do not force people to drive long distances for basic errands like grocery shopping and doctor's visits. Federal, state, and county budgets can invest in public transportation to make it more frequent, reliable, accessible, and affordable. In fact, there are already examples of fast and free bus programs delivering this type of relief to people in communities across the country.¹⁹ Even rural places can be served by transit and walkable streets. There are good examples of rural non-profit rideshare programs run in partnership with local governments,²⁰ bikeshare²¹ and ebike voucher²² programs to help people borrow or buy affordable transportation suited for trips under 5 miles in small town rural settings, effective rural transit service,²³ better street design,²⁴ and mainstreet investment²⁵ to support walkable communities²⁶ where people can get to town by bus and then access everything they need.

¹⁹ Emmett Hopkins, John Stehlin, and Lucy Block, "Fast and Free: How Better Buses Can Lower Costs and Cut Emissions Across the United States," Climate and Community Institute, May 28, 2026, <https://stopgreedbuildgreen.climateandcommunity.org/posts/fast-and-free>.

²⁰ Shared-Use Mobility Center, in collaboration with the Latino Environmental Advancement & Policy (LEAP) Institute, "The Story of Green Raiteros: A Shared & Electric Lifeline for California Farmworkers, 2020," SUMC Mobility Learning Center, February 18, 2020, <https://learn.sharedusemobilitycenter.org/casestudy/the-story-of-green-raiteros-a-shared-electric-lifeline-for-california-farmworkers-2020/>.

²¹ Farrah Daniel, "A Look Into Bike Share in Rural Communities," Better Bike Share Partnership, November 13, 2019, <https://www.betterbikeshare.org/2019/11/13/a-look-into-bike-share-in-rural-communities/>; Kyle Funk, "Bikeshare Solutions for Small Cities & Towns," National League of Cities, June 3, 2022, <https://www.nlc.org/article/2022/06/03/bikeshare-solutions-for-small-cities-towns/>.

²² Kate Kelly, "Sonoma Clean Power Launches 'Bike Electric' Program," California Community Choice Association, March 8, 2021, <https://cal-cca.org/sonoma-clean-power-launches-bike-electric-program/>.

²³ Chris Zeilinger, "When a Small Town Has Great Transit," Community Transportation Association of America, January 14, 2025, <https://ctaa.org/when-a-small-town-has-great-transit/>; "Public Transportation Models for Rural Communities," Rural Health Information Hub, accessed August 25, 2026, <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/transportation/2/public-transportation-models/>; US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, "FTA Recognizes Three Outstanding Rural Transit Agencies," October 3, 2016, <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/fta-recognizes-three-outstanding-rural-transit-agencies>.

²⁴ Federal Highway Administration, *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks*, FHWA-HEP-17-024 (Washington, DC: US Department of Transportation, December 2016), https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/small_towns/. An additional resource, the Small Town and Rural Design Guide, was funded by the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and is "intended to help small towns and rural communities support safe, comfortable, and active travel for people of all ages and abilities." See Small Town and Rural Design Guide, accessed August 25, 2026, <https://ruraldesignguide.com/>.

²⁵ "Making Our Way to Main Street: Walking & Biking in Small Towns and Rural Areas," Bolton & Menk, May 22, 2024, <https://www.bolton-menk.com/resources/making-our-way-to-main-street-walking-amp-biking-in-small-towns-and-rural-areas/>; "Rural Communities: A Two Pronged Approach for Improving Walking and Bicycling," Safe Routes to School National Partnership, March 31, 2015, https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/sr2s_rural_2pronged_approach_20150331.pdf.

²⁶ "Improving Walkability and Quality of Life in Rural Communities," America Walks, April 22, 2025, <https://americawalks.org/improving-walkability-and-quality-of-life-in-rural-communities/>.

To catalyze this improved transportation system, CCI proposes an overhaul of Departments of Transportation (DOTs) at the federal and state levels, as well as massive investment in diverse transportation options to help people have choice in how they get around: including by foot, bike, transit, and car.²⁷ Policymakers from the local to the state to the federal level each have roles to play in redesigning the system. The executive branch can update the federal DOT's rules, guidelines, and culture. Congress can shift the balance of funding and add requirements. States can stipulate their federal and state dollars go through a process that addresses nondriver needs. Finally, local officials play a key role in guiding how funds translate to actual physical infrastructure on community streets.

To support all of these activities, a revamped federal DOT should have multiple field offices in each state, staffed to provide administrative and technical support to activate increased funding quickly and efficiently. This field staff, which in some cases could be resourced by reallocating personnel and office space from overstaffed highway field offices, could provide assistance such as financial analysis, engineering, and design support for transit projects. The surge of funding for non-car infrastructure will need to come from a combination of sources, including reallocation of funds currently spent on wasteful highway projects and a tax structure that asks the super wealthy to pay their fair share. Taken together, this coordinated collection of actions from the local to the federal level will lead the way toward a truly mobile United States that can officially declare its independence from cars.

²⁷ Kira McDonald, Emmett Hopkins, and Narayan Gopinathan, "Letting People Move," Climate and Community Institute, July 2025, <https://climateandcommunity.org/research/letting-people-move/>.

Appendix: ACS microdata methodology

The data was calculated from the 2016–2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata, using an extract from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS).²⁸ This year range was used to facilitate use of the five-year sample over static Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) and core-based statistical areas.²⁹ Use of the microdata was necessary to calculate some of our breakdowns as well as some of our metrics, such as ratios of cars to humans and “car-lite” household status, defined as all persons in households with fewer cars than driving-age people (defined as over the age of 15).

The “survey” and “srvyr” packages were used in R to apply the microdata weights and generate estimates.

Our IPUMS ACS extract included the following variables. The type column refers to person-level (P) or household-level (H) data.

Type	Variable	Label
H	<u>YEAR</u>	Census year
H	<u>MULTYEAR</u>	Actual year of survey, multi-year ACS/PRCS
H	<u>SAMPLE</u>	IPUMS sample identifier
H	<u>SERIAL</u>	Household serial number
H	<u>CBSERIAL</u>	Original Census Bureau household serial number
H	<u>HHWT</u>	Household weight
H	<u>CLUSTER</u>	Household cluster for variance estimation
H	<u>STRATA</u>	Household strata for variance estimation
H	<u>GQ</u>	Group quarters status

²⁸ Steven Ruggles et al., IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 [dataset] (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0>; US Census Bureau, “2016–2021 5-year ACS,” accessed through IPUMS USA SDA, <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/sda/>.

²⁹ These geographic units would have changed across sample years of the data if another available five-year window were used. The latest data year available at the time of analysis was 2022, and areal interpolation or smaller samples would both likely increase error compared with using slightly earlier data.

H	<u>STATEFIP</u>	State (FIPS code)
H	<u>PUMA</u>	Public Use Microdata Area
H	<u>DENSITY</u>	Population-weighted density of PUMA
H	<u>MET2013</u>	Metropolitan area (2013 delineations, identifiable areas only)
H	<u>CITY</u>	City (identifiable cities only)
H	<u>GQTYPE</u> (general)	Group quarters type [general version]
H	<u>GQTYPED</u> (detailed)	Group quarters type [detailed version]
H	<u>OWNERSHP</u> (general)	Ownership of dwelling (tenure) [general version]
H	<u>OWNERSHPD</u> (detailed)	Ownership of dwelling (tenure) [detailed version]
H	<u>HHINCOME</u>	Total household income
H	<u>UNITSSTR</u>	Units in structure
H	<u>VEHICLES</u>	Vehicles available
P	<u>PERNUM</u>	Person number in sample unit
P	<u>PERWT</u>	Person weight
P	<u>SEX</u>	Sex
P	<u>AGE</u>	Age
P	<u>RACE</u> (general)	Race [general version]
P	<u>RACED</u> (detailed)	Race [detailed version]
P	<u>HISPAN</u> (general)	Hispanic origin [general version]
P	<u>HISPAND</u> (detailed)	Hispanic origin [detailed version]
P	<u>CITIZEN</u>	Citizenship status
P	<u>INCTOT</u>	Total personal income
P	<u>FTOTINC</u>	Total family income
P	<u>DIFFMOB</u>	Independent living difficulty
P	<u>DIFFEYE</u>	Vision difficulty
P	<u>VETSTAT</u> (general)	Veteran status [general version]

P	<u>VETSTATD</u> (detailed)	Veteran status [detailed version]
P	<u>TRANWORK</u>	Means of transportation to work
P	<u>TRANTIME</u>	Travel time to work