Has Driving Come to a Halt?

Don Pickrell, Volpe Center

Energy Information Administration 2014 Energy Conference

July 15, 2014



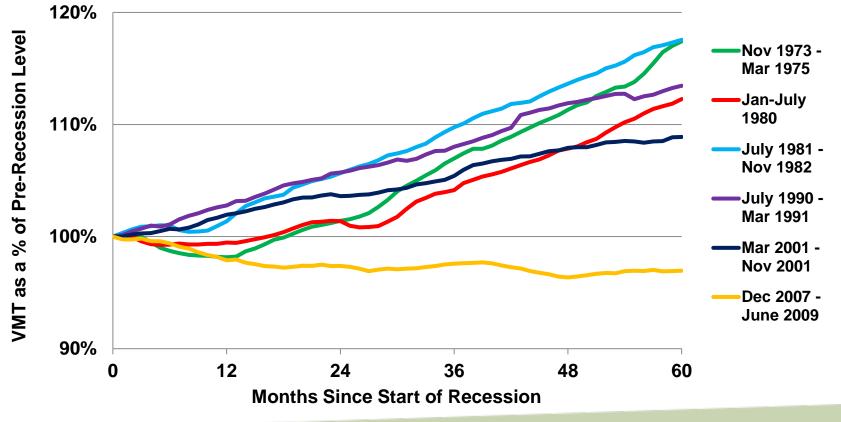
Vcipe The National Transportation Systems Center Advancing transportation innovation for the public good



U.S. Department of Transportation

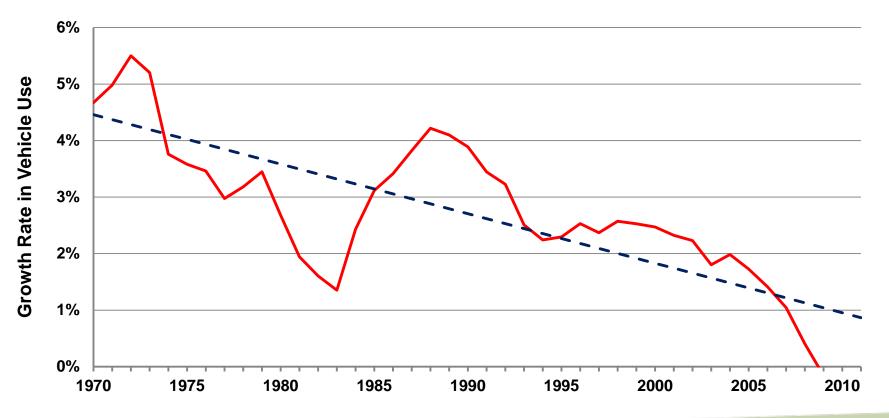
Office of the Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Ce

Here's What's New...





...but Here's What Isn't



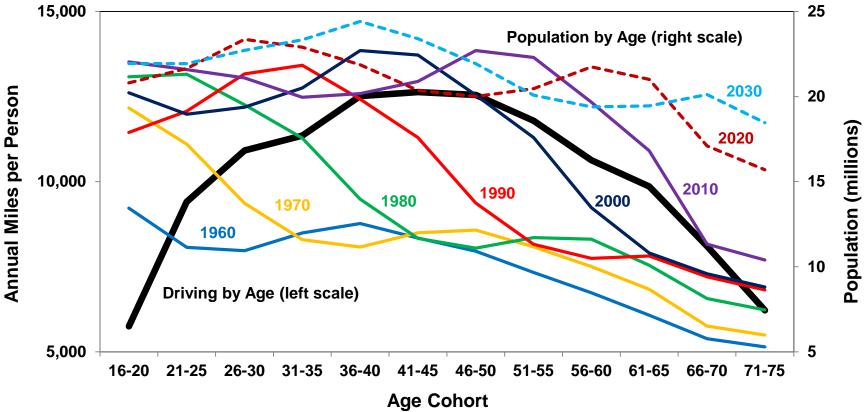


A Perfect Storm?

- Decline in vehicle use since mid-2000s reflects the confluence of several major developments
 - Long-term demographic forces
 - Emerging economic challenges
 - Recent technological innovations
- Some slow-moving demographic trends reached critical thresholds starting about the year 2000
- Many economic challenges are recession-related, but others emerged well before it
- □ New technologies have improved enough to substitute for some travel
- It's early to say, but more fundamental changes in behavior may also be taking hold



Baby Boom, Bust, and Echo



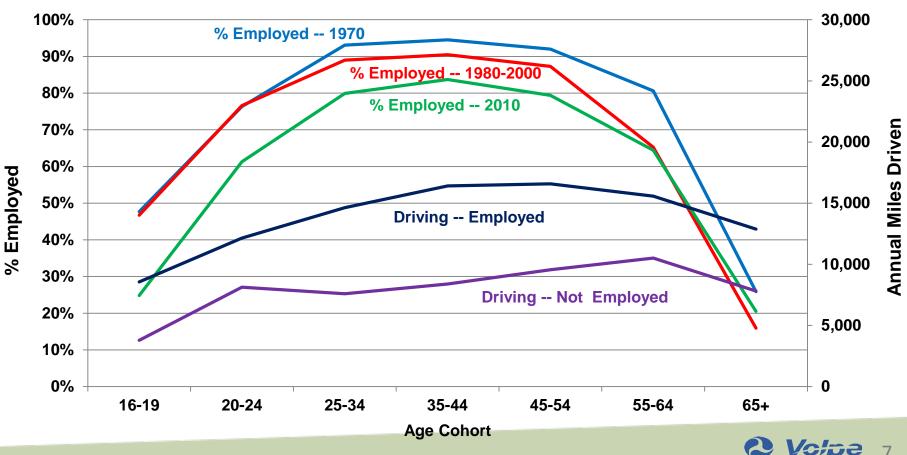


Jobs are "Catching Up" to Their Workers

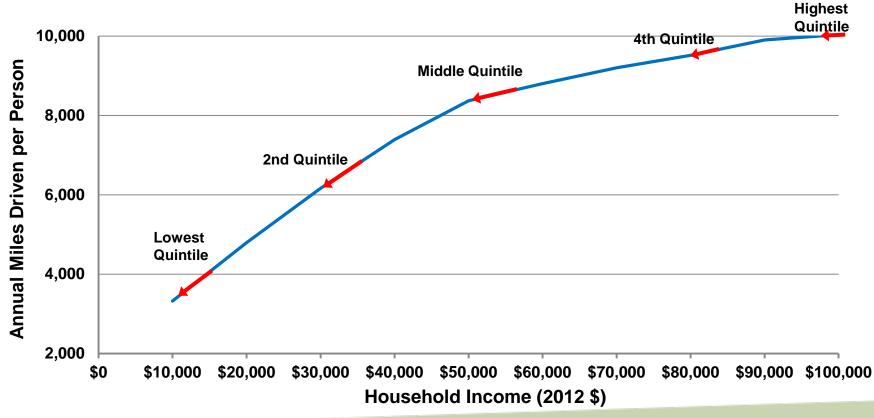
Year	% of Workers		% of Jobs	
	Central City	Suburbs	Central City	Suburbs
1960	54%	46%	66%	34%
1970	46%	54%	57%	43%
1980	39%	61%	52%	48%
1990	35%	65%	51%	49%
2000	34%	66%	45%	55%



The Unemployed No Longer Drive to Work

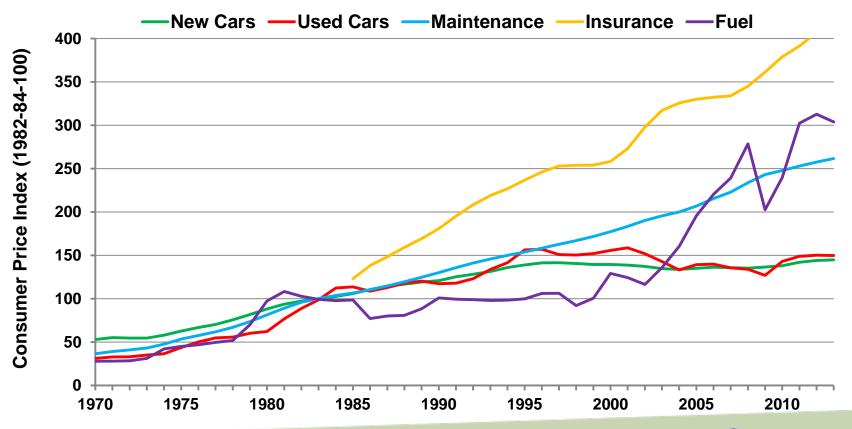


Income Losses Have Hit Hard



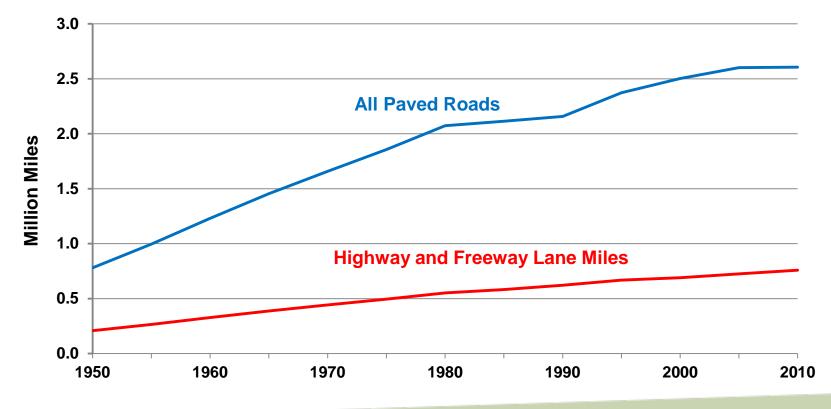


Driving is Getting Expensive



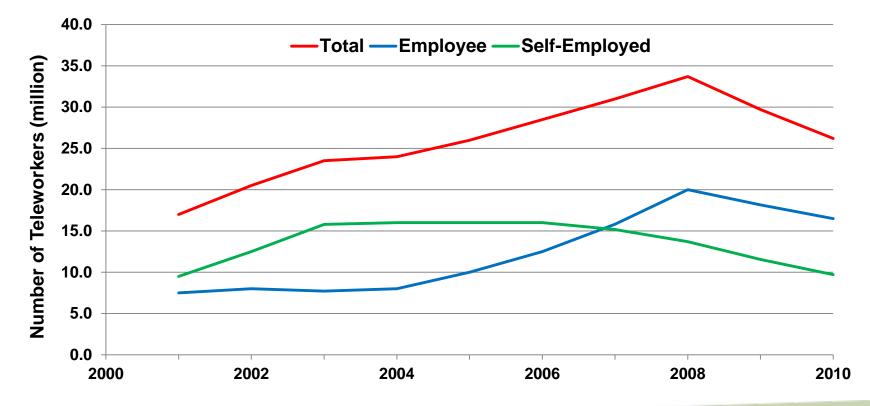
9 Vo!;je 9

The "Highway Boom" Ended, Maybe



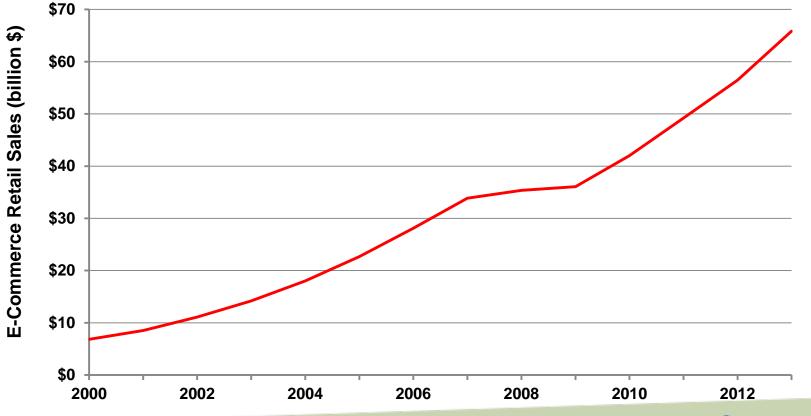


Teleworking Was Catching On, Until...





On-Line Retail is Exploding, but Still Small





New Travel Choices?

- Even if *all* new transit trips since 2005 were formerly made by auto drivers, increase in transit use "explains" at most 12% of decline in auto travel within urban areas
- Almost 60% of recent growth in transit use has been in New York, where auto use barely declined
- Data aren't ideal, but increases in bicycle and walk trips can only account for only another 1-2% of decline in driving



So Where Are We Headed?

- We're already seeing a "bump" in vehicle use as the economy recovers, but it's very tentative
- □ Almost everything points to much slower growth in auto use
 - Likely to converge toward the rate of population growth
 - But this was well underway before the recession
- □ Truck use is likely to grow somewhat faster
- Its effects on energy consumption, emissions, economic activity, and pavement wear are disproportionate



Wild Cards

□ Car sharing

- Do short-term rentals (Zipcar, etc.) increase or reduce overall driving ?
- Will Uber-type services draw from other modes, or just taxis?
- Will car "lending" ever really happen?
- □ Autonomous ("self-driving") vehicles
 - Will people send them on errands all day?
 - Could they revive carpooling?
- Decline in labor force participation
 - How much of it was just the recession, and how much is permanent?
 - Will it permanently decline among women, too?

