



TRAVEL DIFFERENCES BY AGE, GENDER AND LIFECYCLE IN THE BALTIMORE REGION

The most basic characteristics of individuals and households appear to influence how, when, why and how often they travel.

- How do people's travel patterns change as they age?
- Are there key differences in travel behavior between women and men?
- How does lifecycle status (single adult, young couple with children, or empty nester) affect trip making?

The staff of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, working on behalf of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), gathers and examines data to identify the issues that affect travel in the Baltimore region. To answer these questions about travel, staff turned to the BMC Household Travel Survey conducted in 2007-08.

Age

Adults age 35-55 travel the most. On an average weekday, they make almost four trips and cover 32 miles. Children and teenagers, who depend on their parents or other adults to get around, make fewer trips than adults and their trips are half the distance.

Older adults are less likely to travel at night. Only 10 percent of adults age 65-75 began a trip after 6:30 pm compared with 24 percent of adults age 35-55. Instead, older adults travel in the mid-day – adults 75 plus make over half of their trips between the AM and PM peak periods of travel.

But older adults do shop and eat out more than younger adults. On an average weekday 60 percent of adults age 25-35, but nearly 85 percent of adults age 65-75, make a trip to shop or eat out.

Gender

Women make more trips than men. The greatest difference between the sexes is seen in couples that have children. For example, among adults age 25-55 who belong to a couple, women make 4.2 trips per day and men 3.6 trips per day. The difference results in more than 150 extra trips per year per woman.

Much of the extra trip making that women do is associated with taking care of their children and household maintenance. Twice as many women as men picked up or dropped off a passenger. Women also made 50 percent more personal business trips than men, and almost 50 percent more shopping trips or trips to eat out.

After children have left the household, the pattern reverses. Among the empty nesters, men make more trips than they used to and women make fewer – one less trip per day.

Elderly women are an important exception. They make significantly fewer trips than elderly men. The phenomenon, which is seen in the Baltimore region, is national in scope.

Age	Trips Per Day		Average Distance Per Trip (miles)		Licensed Driver	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-5	2.7	2.4	4.6	4.4	0%	0%
5-16	2.7	2.9	4.6	4.0	0%	0%
16-19	2.7	3.2	4.9	4.6	43%	55%
19-25	3.3	3.3	8.8	7.2	82%	83%
25-35	3.4	3.8	9.2	7.2	95%	92%
35-45	3.6	4.0	9.9	6.1	95%	94%
45-55	3.7	3.8	10.3	7.0	94%	91%
55-65	3.7	3.5	8.4	6.4	95%	91%
65-75	3.7	3.2	5.5	5.2	95%	85%
75+	2.6	1.9	4.8	4.4	90%	69%
Total	3.3	3.4	7.8	6.0	68%	70%

DAILY TRIPS, TRAVEL DISTANCE AND LICENSED DRIVERS BY AGE AND GENDER

Some of the difference may be accounted for by having the means to travel. There is also a disparity in licensing rates. For adults 75 plus, 90 percent of men, versus 69 percent of women, have a drivers license. Whatever the cause, the difference is important because of the importance of transportation in meeting basic practical and social needs.

There is evidence that this is a generational phenomenon which won't be repeated among the Baby Boomers. For example, the licensing disparity almost disappears for the Baby Boomers. Their incomes are also less skewed by gender.

Although men make fewer trips than women, the trips are longer – with work trips explaining most of the difference. Baltimore region males travel an average of four miles further than females to work. Men average 15.4 miles and women 11.4 miles on their work trips.

According to Randall Crane of UCLA, national data shows the same gender gap but also suggests that it is narrowing for single-adult households with children and married-couple households with children.¹ “The gender gap is smallest for younger women, and this characteristic is carrying through as the cohort ages,” Crain says. “Perhaps,” he adds, “the presence of children increases the income needs of the household, which may result in women working farther away, even while their home-centered responsibilities remain.”

¹ Crane, Randall. Changes in Travel Characteristics by Gender: U.S. Commuting Trends from a National Sample, 1985-2005. In *TR News*, No. 264, Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, Washington, D.C., 2009, pp. 10-12.

Lifecycle

Households exhibit differences in their travel behavior due to lifecycle status.

Couples

Almost three-quarters of Baltimore region households are headed by a couple. About half of them have at least one child. Among those who have a child, the average is 1.9 children. The couples in the survey that had no children were generally older. Many probably had grown-up children who no longer lived at home.

Households with children make 12.2 trips per day, or almost 4 more than couples who don't have children.

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Household Type	Share of Households (percent)*	Workers per HH	Children per HH**	Trips per HH	Trips per Person	Passenger Trips per HH
Couple						2.7
Child	38	1.6	1.9	12.2	3.3	
No Child	34	1.5	--	8.3	3.4	
Male householder, no wife	3	1.3	1.3	7.0	2.7	1.3
Female householder, no husband	12	1.1	1.8	8.6	2.9	2.1
Householder alone	12	0.6	--	3.7	3.7	0.3
Householder not alone, non-family	2	1.7	1.6	8.1	3.4	1.2

*Total does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

**Includes only households that have at least one child.

Approximately 15 percent of Baltimore region households are headed by a single parent. Most of these households (80 percent) are headed by a female and female-headed households have more children than male-headed households. In general, single-parent households make fewer trips than households headed by couples.

Singles

Single adult households – those who live alone – constitute 12 percent of Baltimore region households. The share in Baltimore City, 18 percent, is the highest. There are more older than younger single adult households and the share increases with age. For example, 1 out of 9 of adults age 25-35, 1 out of 7 age 45-55, and 1 out of 4 age 65-75, live alone. More women than men live alone. The gender difference also increases with age.

Single adult households obviously make fewer trips than other households, around 3.7 per day, but they actually make somewhat more trips per person. The reason is that couples are slightly more efficient because they either share trips or divide up household tasks. For example, couples make almost 3 passenger trips per day, compared with 0.3 passenger trips for singles.



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