

# The Washington Post

*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

## The many reasons millennials are shunning cars

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There's a lot of evidence that millennials don't drive as much — or care as much for cars in general — as previous generations their own age did. They're less likely to get driver's licenses. They tend to take fewer car trips, and when they do, those trips are shorter. They're also more likely than older generations to get around by alternative means: by foot, by bike, or by transit.

There's still a lot of dispute, however, over exactly what these trends mean. Are millennial driving habits a byproduct of the weak economy? (If you have no job to go to, chances are you drive less.) Or do they signal deep and permanent shifts in the American relationship to automobiles? If the latter is true, these nascent millennial indicators could have major implications not just for car dealers and gas stations, but for how the U.S. invests in transportation.

We probably won't know the answer with certainty for at least several years. But researchers at the [U.S. Public Interest Research Group](#) and the [Frontier Group](#), who have been tracking these trends, argue that the case is growing stronger for a major and lasting change in how today's youngest would-be drivers — and those to follow them — use cars. In [a new report](#) (an update to [an earlier survey](#) two years ago), they argue that this also means it's time to rethink how we subsidize, encourage and invest in car use.

As for the millennials themselves, Tony Dutzik, Jeff Inglis and Phineas Baxandall write, "they have the most to gain or lose from the transportation investment decisions we make today, as they will be affected by those investments for decades to come."

Their report defines millennials as born between 1983-2000, the youngest of which are just on the verge of their first driver's licenses (should they choose to get them). The case for durable changes in their behavior — beyond the